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The Meaning of the World Revolution.

By

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THE MEANING

OF THE

WORLD REVOLUTION.

CHAPTER I.

THE WORD AND THE IDEA.

E pur si muove.—GALILEO.

REVOLUTION! A word which suggests unpleasant images. When we think of it, we think of the French Revolution with its guillotinings and *noyades*. Or we think of the Russian Revolution which has seemed to most observers at a distance to consist so far of wholesale shootings, imprisonings, banishings, wholesale confiscations, industrial anarchy, the abolition of trade. We do not think of the Revolution which abolished slavery, or the Revolution which substituted law for personal combat, or the

Revolution which brought to an end among civilised peoples sports in which men strove to kill each other or were torn by wild beasts.

You may object that these changes were the result, not of Revolutions, but of Evolution: that they were not made suddenly but as the consequence of the slow growth of a more humane and more logical consciousness. To which I would reply: that the same is true of all changes. However sudden they appear to be, they have been long preparing. Evolution is going on always. From time to time there arrive periods when mankind becomes aware that some vast change is in progress. Then there is felt a desire to speed it up. Then we have Revolutions.

Evolution and Revolution are really the same process. They both result in change, as both words mean "change." They cause a turning round of man's thought. The bloodshed that often accompanies Revolution is due to the senseless opposition of those who try to resist changes, whose thought has not been turned round, because their brains are hardened by possessions or privilege. No one who understands what Revolutions really are would be

so foolish as to oppose them any more than he would try to push back an avalanche or swim against a tidal wave.

Now most of us think we understand quite clearly the causes of the Revolutions in Russia and in Germany. One was provoked by the tyranny and incompetence of officialdom; the other by the bullying airs and crazed ambition of the Junker caste. What we do not understand is that, although we manage to control our officials and to keep our Junkers quiet, the mass of the population of the British Isles have become conscious of enemies to their liberty and their comfort not less obnoxious than those which caused the outbreaks in Russia and in Germany. In all countries the same ferment is at work. The demand is everywhere for what George Eliot called in "Felix Holt, the Radical": "a man's share in life for every man."

Revolution began to be whispered about early in the year 1917. Russia supplied the word. But the idea behind it had been forming in many lands for a long while before the brute incompetence of government by officials in their own interest provoked the outburst which

washed out in that country, along with a weak, well-meaning, insignificant Tsar, all the existing props of orderly administration.

What this idea may be, what the meaning of the "Revolution" which is in the air, must needs be asked by all who seek understanding of the age in which they live.

So far only vague surmises have been murmured. Many think it means deposing kings. Many believe that land and property are all to be divided up, "which can't do any good, you know, for some would lose or sell their bit, and others would soon get more than their share, and then things would be just the same." Many are afraid of "Bolshevist excesses," and deride nervously the notion of industry existing without capitalists, that is, owners of spare cash, or under any save a capitalist system.

What few have seen, and what no one yet, I think, has bluntly stated, is that the World Revolution now in progress means much more than any or all of these things surmised. It means that there has taken place a change in the thought of Mankind.

* * * *

Numbers of kings have been deposed, num-

bers of systems rooted up, numbers of social experiments made, without any change of heart or mind even among those who were the prime movers in such events.

The French abolished one despotism only to fall willingly after very few years under the jack-boot of another. The Scottish nation threw off the yoke of the Priest . . . and substituted for it the yoke, equally galling and insensate, of the Presbyter. The English dismissed James the Second because he tried in secret to use his position for his own purposes, but they put themselves instantly under William of Orange, who did the same thing openly, and later they endured their Third George, who made it an axiom of state that the upkeep of the Royal profit and prerogative must be his Ministers' chief concern.

These events clearly did not proceed from any sweeping alteration in the thoughts of men. The same might be said, I think, of any precise event which one might examine. Cause and effect are in human affairs so difficult to determine that it puzzles one to say whether actions ever directly result from mental processes, whether changes of belief ever produce

results which rank in History as Events. I am inclined to hold that, while "action is transitory" and due always to mixed motives, the consequences of Thought-Revolution are "permanent, obscure and dark." They cannot be directly traced until many years have passed, perhaps not even then.

For example, let us ask: What *events* can be attributed to the abandonment of the belief that this Earth was the centre of a Universe created expressly for the benefit of one species of earth-dwellers?

No throne was upset, no system uprooted, no books were even publicly burned, to mark the passing of that odd theory which once was received among all civilised nations. Would it be correct, then, to say that no results flowed from this renunciation? By no means. They are evident in every newspaper we read, in our frame of mind towards private as well as public problems, in our habits of everyday life, in everything we think or do or say. Yet these results cannot be catalogued as historical events, each with its date attached for the plaguing of schoolboys. Nor will our Revolution be of necessity marked by events, violent or other-

wise, though in time all acts will be influenced by its effect upon the human mind.

* * * *

This effect must be gradual. Nearly all of us are affected by changes of belief without being aware of them. We cling to the forms of our old convictions without any longer putting them into practice. Unconscious that our point of view has been shifted, we profess one faith, and are moved to action by another. So it will be seen, long after the Coming Revolution has turned the mind of man definitely away from its earlier prepossessions, that many will consider themselves to be still under the influence of these, although their conduct will prove the contrary to be true.

Already it is possible to discover this Facing-both-Ways attitude. There are many who say that because the majority in Great Britain approved the war, the Irish ought to have been forced to fight; but who, in spite of majorities in Austria and Germany approving war, protested against Bohemians being forced to fight for Austria; Alsatians and Lorrainers for Germany. The same type of mind, while finding it impossible as yet to admit the self-

governing claims of national movements near at hand, is persistent in demanding this right for small nationalities at a distance.

There are many, too, who considered compulsory service right and necessary in Britain and the United States, but denounced it as tyranny in the German States: who, while asserting that "the masses need gentlemen to lead 'em," assert also that the gentlemen have made a terrible mess of their leading: who would be shocked by the suggestion that Diplomacy is a back-number and will not live again in its old forms, but who declare that diplomatists have been "worse than useless" and that "the whole system ought to be gone into and overhauled."

This gradual infiltration of new ideas saves large numbers of us from what would be the painful consequences of resisting them. Many who believe now that they will resist to the death the measures of the Revolution, whatever they may be, will be found in time, not only accepting them, but declaring that they have always thought such measures necessary.

* * * *

"But," you say, "the enquiry as to the

nature of the Revolution waits for an answer. Let us hear in what direction the mind of Humanity is to be turned."

"Is being turned" let us say, or, better still, "has been turning through the course of many ages."

More than two thousand years ago Euripides, the greatest poet of Greece, if a poet's greatness is to be judged by the breadth of his sympathy, the penetration of his insight, the moving eloquence of his appeal to what lies deepest in our souls—more than two thousand years ago Euripides pleaded the evolution which is still to come to-day. He challenged everything which put the claims of men and women below the claims of system, which counted their welfare less important than the greatness of City, Country or Empire. He challenged everything which exalted the State at the expense of the individual; everything that gave to the few position and prosperity, while the many were despised, used as tools, bullied sometimes and sometimes cajoled, always regarded as the backs upon which the few might climb to riches and power.

"Lies, lies again and still they lie,"

he cried of the State and National Policy and the extension of Imperial sway, so far as these did not (and we know they never have) contribute to the happiness of man, woman and child, so far as they demanded sacrifice of individual joy and freedom, of homes and loved ones, and simple, natural life.

What is the value of a policy which, in order to safeguard a State from possible future harm, takes a baby from its mother's arms and throws it from the city wall so that its tender body is dashed to pieces? That was the query which Euripides suggested in *The Trojan Women*, and from this sprang a stinging criticism of the contemporary State. What good could come to Athens if, in order to keep up her prestige and teach others (as Cleon said, "by a striking example") that its demands must not be refused, its rulers found it necessary to massacre the men of Melos and to sell their women and children as slaves?

"All the great accepted conventions, slavery, polygamy, concubinage, war, and the wonderful reasons that clever and rhetorical people can always find for what is wrong, Euripides showed them for what they are, things that

war against the soul. He goes back to Nature against all the conventions, to the Real Facts, to Humanity.''*

* * * *

This age has its ''great accepted conventions'' to fight against. Slavery still exists, though in different shape, the new more cruel in some aspects than the old. Polygamy and concubinage, by which I understand the degradation of women under whatever disguise, with no matter what sanction, are no less flagrant now than they were in the Fifth Century B.C.

And war? If that was a curse to the Greek world, is it not still more harmful and more desolating to us?

These and other evils are accepted still as unavoidable, feebly accepted by those who have had their souls clogged and deadened either by the deceitfulness of riches or by the poison of poverty undeserved. They have been accepted ever since Euripides poured out his passion against them in vain. But his words were not uttered in vain. They did not die, nor did the words of others who have made the like appeal.

* "From Pericles to Philip," by T. R. Glover. Methuen, 1917.

Gathering force as the centuries slipped by, the protest has taken hold of men's minds everywhere. The seed of the Coming Revolution has been sown all through the ages. Hitherto its produce has been small. Now at last it is germinating in millions of spirits. The day of questioning is at hand, the day of liberation. The transvaluation of all values, not in Nietzsche's sense but in that of Euripides, will be the work of the Coming Revolution in the thought of Mankind.

When that Revolution is come full circle, the axiom will have been established that the happiness and the well-being of each individual living creature, the health, contentment and gladness of man, woman and child, are of more value than anything else. They will be set far above the power of sovereigns, the dignity of statesmen, the comfort of ruling classes; far above a great commerce, powerful armaments, vast wealth in the hands of a small number.

Strong forces of argument will be marshalled to prove this impossible, undesirable, contrary to Nature, and at variance with the character of man. Powerful interests are bound up with these assertions, the interests not alone of those

who draw present profit from their acceptance, but of those, too, whose view of life prompts them to look for such profit in the future.

It will be said that without a great commerce, creating vast wealth and protected by powerful armaments, the fabric of society could not be kept up. The reply to this will be that no fabric of society is eternal, and that as new conditions arise, the old framework will adapt itself to them.

Most determined of all will be the opposition of those who consider the mass of people predestined to labour for the benefit of the few who know how to take advantage of them. The persuasion that the mass of people do not matter, that they are merely the base upon which the strong and the cunning build up their proud and predatory systems; the cynical and contemptuous regarding of mankind as a *servum pecus*, cattle to be driven, which was at the base of the policy of Bismarck and is characteristic of almost all Ruling Persons; these will come into bitter conflict with the opposing conviction that no one man or class of men matters more than another, that the rights of all are merely such as they can main-

tain, and that it is time for the mass to claim that share in the heritage of the race which has so long been denied them.

By the artificial constitution of society they have been condemned to begin life under worse conditions than any other species in the animal kingdom. They have the right to say that, if Man's ingenuity has put his existence on a different plane from that of other species, this shall be turned to the advantage of all, not of a small number only. In the satisfaction of this demand many changes must be made. Much may disappear which has seemed a necessary part of life. But nothing essential can be eliminated, and the gain would outweigh any loss, even if the whole of what we call our civilisation were to go by the board.

* * *

For if civilisation as it is conceived to-day can only be kept up by suffering, degradation and sacrifice, it is right that those who suffer, those who are degraded and sacrificed, should decide whether it shall continue or no.

If they should say:

"Let it go on. We will bear the cost of it in our stunted lives. We will be maimed and

blinded, we will be slaughtered by the million, for the sake of the pomp of Empires, for the sake of the dignity of statesmen and in order that a small number of men and women not different from ourselves may enjoy a sheltered, scented, sybarite existence, all their needs satisfied, even their fancies indulged, all that could offend delicate ears and eyes and nostrils kept far from them."

If the mass of People say that, why, then let civilisation as it is conceived to-day continue, and let Humanity stew in the juice of its own pusillanimous folly.

But I do not believe the mass of People are so fond of their suffering and their degradation and their sacrifice. I believe they will say that such a civilisation as this has endured too long already, and that change must forthwith begin. I believe there is a spirit working in the hearts of men which will make them say that no comfort, no beauty, no power is other than a curse and a crime if it must be purchased by the diminution of any single human being's health or happiness. I believe the day is coming when each single human being's health and happiness will be the only aim worth considering.

That the love of a wife for her husband, of a mother for her son, should ever have been held of no account against the strengthening of a throne, the securing of an Empire, will then be reckoned a sign of the barbarity and insanity of former ages. The empty and fleeting nature of all earthly pomps and dignities will then be seen so clearly as to arouse wonder that importance could ever have been attached to such trifles.

All will perceive that the one reality in this perplexing world, the one satisfaction which can be grasped by all and which does not deceive, is Affection. Not the vague, unreal sentiment of the philanthropist, who, as a rule, while professing love for the race, dislikes and is heartily disliked by individual men and women, but the warm, steady, comforting affection of parents and children; the affection of lovers whose flame of attachment, lit by passion, burns more clearly and with greater volume as the years increase; the affection of friends bound by common memories, common aspirations; the affection which wells up at the sight of a kindly, smiling countenance, of a child's trustful eyes, at the doing of a generous

action, at the speaking of a helpful word.

We have held Affection too cheap. It has been trampled under the feet of men whose hearts were steeled against it by the lusts which war against the soul. Lust of power, lust of riches, lust of fame. But it cannot be for ever so despised.

When the Revolution is complete, it will be held that until all have enough, it must be shameful for any one to have more than enough. It will be understood that the sufferings of Peoples have been due either to the contemptuous disregard of their interest by monarchs or to the neglect of it by rulers who have not been wise or strong enough to abandon monarchical traditions and to substitute for them the principle of People's Rule. There will be a stubborn resolve not to let that principle go.

National greatness will not be valued at all if it be expressed in terms of force, of export and import returns, of industrial output, of diplomatic gains by craft or bullying. The phrase will be meaningless unless it imply a self-supporting, self-reliant population engaged in active, healthful toil, scornful of theories and

holding fast to the only realities we know—work and recreation which induce not alone vigour of body, but also clearness of mind; the affections of Home; the enjoyment of Nature and the copying of Nature by Art; friendly relations with all men. So far as government can encourage national greatness of this kind, government will be valued; otherwise the world will have no use for it.

* * * *

Never so far as we can judge from records and writings, never in the course of Man's development, has there existed before to-day a dissatisfaction so widely spread, so eager a readiness to try any experiment which may establish human existence upon a firmer, saner foundation.

Never has the sense been so acute which tells us—

(1) That in every civilisation the many have been exploited by the few;

(2) That leisure and luxuries, pride and power for a small number can be secured by no other means than keeping the great number in subjection and squalor;

(3) That the few have dazzled and deceived

the many into endurance of their servitude by inventing gods, heavens and hierarchies; castes or classes; monarchical claims to obedience on the ground of divine origin; rulers' pretensions to dispose of the lives and the labour of all men for the greater glory of the State.

These claims and pretensions are not always deliberately invented. Often they are the result of a desire to justify tyrannical acts by representing them as a necessary outcome of the order of the Universe. A perverted conception of that order has been allowed to triumph over Instinct and over Reason as well. Government which began as a means to an end, has become an end in itself. Originally aimed at securing the free and undisturbed development of individuals forming communities, it is now a monstrous hindrance to the attainment of any such ideal. It has trampled upon freedom. It has produced the most devastating disturbances.

Matthew Arnold in "Culture and Anarchy" spoke of the "fatal weakness for machinery" which he found in the English mind. He deplored his countrymen's "bent for attaching themselves to machinery and losing all sense,

while they so attach themselves, of the spirit and truth of things."

But this bent and fatal weakness are not peculiar to any one race of mankind. All races fall quickly into the error of exalting the system above the objects of the system, the machine above the purpose for which it was made. Nothing could more plainly exhibit this error than the transforming of government from protector into tyrant, from an assurance of security into a source of unceasing danger and alarm.

So purblind is the worship of the Machine, that the best men among those who take part in government are in their actions no better than the worst. The mind which turned once towards a noble and a simple conception of life is quickly subdued to that it works in: to the delusion which pervades governing classes that the interest of the State is all-important and that qualms about the sacrifice of individuals must be stifled.

The worser kind of governing men deliberately use the Machine. The better men become part of it unconsciously, or against their wills. The result is the same.

"The advantage of the country" has been

made to serve as excuse for all manner of crimes. As it was in Sparta, when a general charged with treacherous, unprovoked aggression against a neighbouring People, the Thebans, was acquitted on the ground that "acts which are to one's country's advantage are by ancient usage permitted," as it was then, so it is now. The statesmen of Germany offered the same excuse for the bludgeoning of Belgium. The interests, the sufferings, the advantage of Peoples are not taken into account. All that matters is the aggrandisement of what Nietzsche called rightly "that coldest of all cold monsters, the State."

> "It lies coldly, and this is the lie which proceeds from its mouth:—
>
> 'I, the State, am also the People.'
>
> But it is a lie."

For what does the advantage of the State mean?

It means the advantage of those who control the machinery.

The wars of Napoleon made the People of France poorer every year; every year more fathers and mothers wept for their sons, more

wives for their husbands. To the People of France these wars were a calamity. But to Napoleon, to his generals, to his heads of civil departments, to his diplomatists, to his army contractors, they brought profit and glory, and so, in smaller or greater measure, to all who could get hold of any part of the machine.

The victory of the Prussians in 1871 with the creation of the German Empire did the People of Germany no good whatever, but it gave Bismarck a vastly more dignified position; it made his King an Emperor, it increased the importance of all who had to do with government.

* * * *

Search through History and you will find no war which brought advantage to a People. War has always been made (save in a few cases where rulers were too feeble or too foolish to avert misunderstandings) for the benefit of those who govern. In general the same may be said of all other acts of government. When monarchs have made beneficial laws, they have had mostly their own benefit in mind. The motive which impels legislation by elected rulers is the hope of influencing votes.

Until the XIXth century those who governed usually controlled the expression of opinion. They were able to prevent he enlightenment of the People. Since Thought was freed of its fetters, there has been a rapid advance in the process of explaining to the People why they suffer, how they are harmed by the persistence of ancient tradition, by the criminal ambitions and the not less criminal ineptitude of those whom they endure as rulers.

Light sometimes issues from unexpected sources, as when in Paris lately the traditionalist and conservative *Journal des Débats* told Mr. Balfour bluntly that as British Foreign Minister he followed the methods of the XVIIIth century, pursuing a hidden diplomacy: and that while he spoke of the war as a war between Peoples, he persisted in acting as if it were a war between governments, still looking at foreign policy "through absolutist spectacles."

The catastrophe which fell upon the world in 1914 hastened the instruction of the Peoples and brought much nearer the moment when they will see, all of them, how cruelly and cynically they have been used and deceived. All governments have failed them. Everywhere men and

women are asking, What is the value of our institutions, our civilisation, if it leads only to the slaughter of millions, to suffering for all, to the reversal of every humane impulse, of all teaching founded in the Religion of Love?

> "If civilisation be not in men's hearts, then it is nowhere, it does not exist."

So speaks a character in a book by a French doctor, marked by a note of fierce prophetic warning and by terrible clearness of sight. That is what the Coming Revolution will teach.

> "'I often think of civilisation, real civilisation. In my mind it is like a choir of tuneful voices singing, or a marble statute on a bare hill, or a man who says 'Love one another,' or 'Return good for evil.' But men have done no more than repeat these things for two thousand years. The kings and priests have far too many interests in this world to think of others like them."

All these great words like Civilisation the Revolution is examining; it will either throw them on the rubbish heap or teach their true meaning.

* Civilisation, 1914-1917, par Denis Thevenin. Mercure de France, 1918.

Civilisation, we shall learn, is not the luxury and ostentation of big cities, does not lie in the elaboration of comforts and conveniences, is not summed up in motor omnibuses, electric trains, the air-plane, the telephone.

National greatness is not to be won, we shall understand, by possessing a formidable military power and repudiating all the restraints of honour and humane feeling; nor yet by building an unconquerable Navy and letting a quarter of the population grow up stunted for want of decent conditions of life.

Institutions, no matter how ancient or how dignified by tradition, were made for Man, and not Man for institutions. If they irk instead of easing him, as institutions were meant to do, they can, and must, be swept away.

That is the Revolutionary idea.

CHAPTER II.

THE END OF RULING CLASSES.

> I believe a base will be found for united work after the war if we organise all the best minds to think for everybody, to fight against existing chaos, social, political, national."—*Maxim Gorky, The World's Brain.*

Such tinder as was lit by the spark of Hunger-revolt in Russia and blazed so swiftly into floating ash—such dry wood and harmful rubbish there are in almost all the countries of Europe. Already in Germany and Austria, in Hungary and Bulgaria, it is afire and partly consumed. In all countries the oligarchical forms of government, the ascendancy of a Ruling Class, are being examined and found wanting. Not since the year of revolutions, 1848, which gave warning to irresponsible monarchies that they would not be tolerated much longer, a warning they would not heed—not since 1848 has there been so general a feeling of dissatisfaction and hopefulness. Now

we may see the 1848 effort repeated with solider consequences and on the same scale; nay, on a larger, for then England stood aside from the pastime of turning systems over and kicking crowns about.

If we permit ourselves to glance in passing at the Might-Have-Been, we must needs stand regretful at our grandfathers' moderation. Had we gently constitutionalised the young Victoria to the pattern of her grandson George, Prussia's greed and insolence might have been checked at their first exposal. The desire in 1864 of five out of every six Englishmen was to defend Denmark, which looked to us to rap the robber hand stretched out after Schleswig and Holstein. Had it been rapped with energy, and warning given that so robber hands always should be, we might not have had so unpleasant a police job to carry through later. It was "My People or my Prussian relations." The choice of the latter was comprehensible enough in a sovereign who even towards the end of life could describe herself, half-facetiously, to one of her grandchildren as "an old German lady."

In the seventy years that have dolefully added since 1848 to the record of crimes, follies and

misfortunes which, in Gibbon's acrid phrase, makes up the History of Mankind, the Sovereign's place in England has been regulated so as to fit in with People's Rule. Yet the People have not ruled.

No more than in the sixties?

Well, perhaps a shade more. But very far from fully.

Here we are interrupted by the Devil's Advocate. Out he pops upon us with the query: "Can the People rule? Never mind whether Democracy is desirable, is it possible?"

"Clearly, not possible," I reply, "in the sense of an individual ruling, or a small body of people taking decisions and issuing commands. But given a sufficient number of honest and capable men proposing openly and intelligibly to the People what courses they should follow, the People can choose from among these courses and their choice for the most part will, I hold, assuredly be sound."

Mr. W. H. Mallock, whose early reputation as a humorist makes it sometimes difficult not to suspect him of irony, asserts in his book on "The Limits of Pure Democracy," that the Many cannot decide anything for themselves,

but must be guided by the Few. "Democracy only knows itself through the co-operation of oligarchy."

This appears to me to be a misuse and confusion of terms. Democracy means the rule of the Many. Oligarchy means the rule of a Few. These systems cannot exist together. The one cancels the other.

The simplest way to examine the problem of government is to liken the People to the shareholders in a public company, who choose directors. By the directors, and by the officials whom they appoint, the business of the company is carried on. The shareholders as a body could not carry it on themselves.

But the directors do not rule the shareholders. They do not irresponsibly control the company. They can take this or that action within their powers as directors. Outside of those powers they can propose that this or that further thing shall be done. The shareholders approve or censure their acts; adopt their advice or reject it. They can, if they please, dismiss them and appoint other directors.

I agree with Mr. Mallock that the People are not likely to become inspired by ideas of good

government suddenly and all at once, as if by some wind of doctrine. They must have ideas suggested to them, and those who have the capacity to originate ideas will always be few in number. If Mr. Mallock means that the Few must guide the Many in the sense of offering them suggestions, everyone who understands mass-psychology will agree with him.

* * * *

This is what Governing Classes (oligarchies) ought to have done, but have not done. Partly from lack of ideas, due to defective schooling, concentration of interest upon field sports, over-eating and too much alcohol; partly from dislike of change; partly from the nature of the Party game—"my only desire," wrote Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Salisbury, "is to see the game properly and scientifically played" —the politicians have not desired to guide. They preferred to follow what they believed, often wrongly, to be the popular wishes.

No Democracy can be other than a pitiable failure without the co-operation of the few who think and look ahead. But if Mr. Mallock intended to suggest that a few must rule, not after the manner of directors managing the busi-

ness of a company, but after the manner in which the Thirty ruled Athens or the Bureaucracy ruled Russia, then I deny that he is describing Democracy at all.

What we need if we are to make Democracy a sound workable system, giving better results than other systems, is first a People desirous of good government; and, secondly, directors chosen by them, honest and capable men who will put before the People projects of good government based upon the ideas of those who think and look ahead, projects which the People can either approve or cast out.

Up to this present Democracy has failed for lack of a sufficiency of these honest, capable leaders. We have depended for government upon Ruling Classes, and the Ruling Classes have not produced them. In no country have there been enough leaders free from dogmatic theories on the one hand, and from personal vanity and pretensions on the other. The Peoples have been either dominated or befooled.

Many have flung themselves into public life as champions of the right of Peoples to govern themselves in their own interest and have been

found after a little time to be no less desirous than the believer in despotism or oligarchy of forcing the People the way they think the People should go. A Robespierre or a Lenin is no less poisonous a growth than a Bismarck or a Bloody Mary.

The wish to govern, to give orders, to enforce obedience, is the mark of an intolerant, tyrannical, inferior mind. The reason why the personality of Christ compels everybody's admiring affection is that, of all characters known to everybody, His had in it the least desire to impose authority, and the most desire to persuade.

Others who have entered upon political careers resolved to scorn delights and live laborious days in the endeavour to "remould a sorry scheme of things entire," have been engulfed by the Ruling Class. The System has squeezed them dry of their determination. The poison of Power or the pleasures of elegant luxury have robbed them of their ideals.

* * * *

"Aristocracies have no ideas," but they give dinner parties. They subtly flatter. "You are 'one of us.'" John Morley started with a

healthy hatred of shams. It was not very long before he wrote in his Diary of a dinner at Marlborough House: "The glittering silver and glowing gold, the superb flowers and fruit, the colour of ribands, stars and orders, and the general presence of fame, distinction, greatness of place and power about one."

Again of an entertainment at Londonderry House: "The meal was sumptuous; the music not too loud; each table with a little mountain of roses, all pink here and deep rose there, coffee and cigarettes in the fine gallery." Not surprising to find Morley in a later passage referring to a speech he made in Parliament opposing a Radical motion with the aside that "he could as easily have spoken in its defence."

Thus were good Radicals spoiled. Thus did the Ruling Class strengthen its defence with "little mountains of roses," with "glittering silver and glowing gold." Thus did it turn those who might have overthrown its predominance into supporters of Privilege and Caste.

The Ruling Class, crafty enough to open its ranks to any who threatened it with attack;

and divided only by such a made distinction as divides the Red from the Blue Army in a sham fight, ruled in the interest of the Party System. Corrupt in itself, as any system must be that values the Machine more highly than the objects for which it was created, the Party System attached to itself by unbreakable ties the Ruling Class, Landlordism, the interests of Capital and High Finance, Bureaucracy, the hereditary principle in legislation, the barrier between "gentle people" and "the poor," the whole evil round of devices for resisting change.

The controlling politicians of both parties formed a close ring. Only by those admitted within this ring was office to be hoped for. To office-holders all authority and influence belonged.

Once in a while a strong character like Parnell might defy and almost defeat them. But the job of breaking in those who did not at once bite contentedly on the Party bit was for the most part easy. The rewards offered were not high, set against those of commerce; but they were high compared with what the ability of politicians could command in any other occupation, excepting that of the Law,

which puts an artificial premium upon agility, and calls for no depth of mental process.

The life was agreeable. It conferred pleasant companionship, a sense of importance, deference from "the public," the stimulus of speaking, the mild excitement of mimic battles, engaged in so as not to leave the field clear for the fights in earnest which genuine reformers were impatient to provoke.

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From a distance the men who officered the Party forces in these manœuvre combats, who took turns at being the Government and the Opposition, used to appear dignified, at times even heroic figures, well equipped for their great tasks; men whose information, drawn from hidden sources, went far beyond that of unofficial observers, who had studied and thought deeply into the problems set by conditions at home and abroad. They were generously credited with capabilities far above those of the "ordinary man," who modestly thought these problems beyond reach of his understanding.

When one came to acquaintance with them at a closer range, the politicians, the diplo-

matists, the administrators, who once seemed super-men, were discovered to possess, as a rule, less than the "ordinary man's" practical ability, small aptitude for steady work, no convictions, no ideals, and, which is most disconcerting of all, less wide and accurate information than can be acquired from sources open to everybody—books, newspapers, atlases, travel.

Their conversation rises seldom above the personal, the trivial, the occurrences and gossip of the hour. They do not ponder, they never have pondered, the march of events, the growth of ideas, save as these might be likely to affect their own positions, their hold on public esteem. They do not care to discuss wide issues, which are labelled "unpractical." Speculation fatigues them. Probabilities based on the past, dips into a possible future, are equally distasteful to their ease-loving minds. "Keep to the business of the moment," is their motto.

If they transacted the business of the moment skilfully, they might, though that is merely the mint, anise and cummin of governing, be pardoned for their neglect of the weightier matters

of the law, justice and equity and truth. But, in fact, they transact it very ill.

"Few men of any real distinction in any walk of life have ever belonged to British Governments, or have even sat in Parliament, except perhaps lawyers." Such is the conclusion of a truly eminent man of our time, Sir Ronald Ross. He rightly blames the newspapers for not exposing the "political adventurers" who govern us. But *quis custodiet ipsos custodes?* Who shall guide newspaper proprietors? Besides, there are Party journals, tied and bound to the Party Machine. Thus the solemnly ridiculous Mutual Administration Society formed by politicians is backed up by the Press.

"Did you know what these people were like? I had no idea." So Lord Kitchener wrote of the politicians in the 1915 Coalition Ministry not long before his death.

Few have any idea. This must be changed, will be changed. Bureaucracies, Old Gangs, systems which are mere husks of authority without any kernel of sincere effort towards improvement, these will soon be everywhere

on trial. It is the bounden duty of all who know the Ruling Classes for what they are to enlighten the world.

As to their origins also, let us look into these.

CHAPTER III.

THE CURSE OF INDUSTRIALISM.

> Modern civilisation, with all its mechanical appliances for making life comfortable and progress rapid on the outside, has become a barrier with regard to the inner spirt of man. It has made our life so intricate that it has lost its transparency of simplicity.—*Rabindranath Tagore, Lecture at Osaka, Japan*, 1916.

Freedom with good government this land of Britain has sought for nigh a thousand years. At Runnymede the nobles checked the King's power. Not so fully but that we had to cut off a head four hundred years afterwards to make their meaning plain. Nevertheless Magna Charta made a beginning. Later, the claim of the nobles to fill the land with the tumult of their feudal petty wars was disallowed, though still the easy-going English left them power of other kinds to linger in patches until this present age.

By a sad misfortune, after centuries of

struggle with oppression in many a shape and just when the People seemed about to breathe free, arose a new tyranny. The clamps of Industrialism were put on.

Not more pitiless, not more stunting and deforming the rule of the Land Barons than that of the Barons of Workshop and of Mill. The hope born of the French Revolution, the dawning of a day of liberty which gave a glimpse of wider destinies and of a larger share in the good things of life for the mass of mankind, were soon hidden by the smoke from forge and factory.

An historian not of emotional temperament describes "a wave of misery" which spread over wretched England and "reached its summit in the course of 1842." This was the period of a Royal Commission reporting on Child Labour in terms which even now chill the blood with horror and make one fiercely cry that no calamity could be held unjust which should fall upon the third and fourth generation of those who for gain so debased and corrupted humanity.

From "the summit of misery" in 1842 we have descended somewhat, thanks to unceasing

efforts of a few high-hearted, generously-minded men. Efforts always obstinately opposed. Forces of industrial barons strong in both Chambers of Parliament. Their parasites and hirelings, the lawyers, ceaselessly busy in their cruel interest. Not deliberately, intentionally cruel; not even the cruelty of callous indifference, but that cruelty most devilish because hardest to convict, that which says:

"The world is ordered so. The weak must suffer. Progress demands it. I grow rich, truly, by reason of their suffering, but I cannot interfere with a law of Nature. Those wise men, the Economists, know all about it. Everything is for the best . . . . so long as it suits me."

* * * *

Industrialism had its Political Economy, like its laws, made to suit itself. 'Twas a creed more inhuman and damnable than that which went before. The landlords, great and small, believed that God had created them to be well off and those who tilled their land to be "the poor." But they believed also that He meant all men to be comfortable after their fashion. There was a certain condescending comrade-

ship in the squire. Even my lord had a friendly word for his hinds, sent them a flitch at Christmas, bade them be merry at harvest suppers and such like rural feasts. The "landed aristocracy" and "landed gentry" held Hodge to be not essentially different from their cattle: they treated him not much worse than they treated their cattle. He had to be kept in a certain state of vigour or his value would be gone. To replace him was not easy.

The manufacturer, brought into being by the invention of machinery, and by the heedlessness which allowed him to turn this invention entirely to his own profit, soon learned to rate the men and women, and, to England's eternal shame, the children, who worked for him, not so high even as cattle. They were merely parts of his machinery. Not important parts either, since, more provident than the landlords, he took care that labour should exist in so large quantity that there might always be more workers than jobs. This secured him against scarcity of labour, kept down wages, made the workers humble, seeing that the employer could pick and choose among them.

Thus came full circle the wheel of that one-

sided individualism whose distinguishing marks Lord Milner has declared to be "abuse of the right of private property and the cruelty of the scramble for gain," these giving rise in turn to "the doctrine of revolutionary Socialism."

* * * *

The high-sounding declaration in France, with echoes in England and elsewhere, of the rights and equality, the freedom and brotherhood of men, was thus quickly followed by a more marked division of mankind into two categories, the struggling-for-life many and the comfortable few. These shaded off into one another through grades of diminished comfort and increased struggle, but, as the Industrial System spread, the dividing line showed up more clearly. The "governing class" crystallised. It had outgrown since Tudor times the stage in which it was composed of the more powerful nobles and the higher clergy. Lawyers wriggled into it. The squirearchy followed. Manufacturing and commercial interests found it desirable to be represented in Parliament and in the Ministries of both sides.

The upper and middle classes merged. The

term "gentle-folk," which had earlier denoted those who by benefit of birth had no need to work at all, now came to include those who worked, not with their hands but with their heads. Because the educated, the literates, had always made the laws and lorded it over the illiterate, and because the brain-workers were few in number, they could exact payment far higher than that which rewarded work done with the hands. So the notion grew that head-work was more dignified than hand-work and must necessarily be paid on a different scale. The Many, stupefied by the increasing harshness of the struggle, raised only spasmodic protest against the conditions forced upon them as the under-dogs, until those conditions became intolerable.

Landlordism had bound a heavy burden upon the patient necks of the Disinherited. Industrialism, by encouraging "those two great curses of the social system" (I am again quoting Lord Milner), "irregular employment and unhealthy conditions of life," made them at last too grievous to be borne.

* * * *

Then began "reforms." Each Party in

turn passed measures of palliation, always with the view of winning elections and securing the spoils of office. The voting power of the under-dogs increased; for a long time they did not know what to do with it. The chaffing counsel which Bob Lowe offered to the Ruling Class, "We must educate our masters," was not seriously received. It was left to "the masters," it still is left to them, in spite of schools everywhere, to educate themselves. For the mass this was impossible. The marvel was that so many achieved it. Only here a few and there a few could draw from their unconquerable souls courage to make a beginning and obstinacy to persevere. From their perseverance sprang the Labour Movement, passing through the stages of Trade Unionism, Socialism and Syndicalism. The under-dogs began to ponder, to ask questions, to wonder why they were most of them condemned to existence on poverty's edge, while others appeared to be born into a happier state and, as of right, to enjoy the good things of life.

Many who earned a bare subsistence by muscular exertion or by handicraft replied by gibes to those questions and wonderings, flouted

those who sought to set their feet upon a fairer road. A consumptive house-painter wrote a novel a few years ago which, after the poor fellow's death, got itself published. It presented a faithful picture of the struggle in which a man of active brain had to engage with other men of his own condition if he proposed the setting up of some better system than the system which kept them at the mercy of employer, often a Gradgrind, and of foreman, often a bully, knowing that if once they were "out," their homes would very likely have to be sold up before they found another job. The house-painter-novelist's gloomy conclusion was that his mates were too stupid, too sunken in beery degradation, to make any stir.

But that was before the war.

* * * *

In their enforced inaction the soldiers of all countries have been thinking. We have seen the effect of this in Russia. We have seen the effect of it in Germany. We are seeing and hearing in England, in the reverberating of the word Revolution something of what passes in the mind of the British soldier.

The British soldier—ask anyone who has

been thrown with him lately—is resolved of this : he will not go back to the conditions under which he lived before the war.

" What have we been sticking it for? Not for that."

This is not a resolve confined to the ranker. It prevails among a very large number of officers in all grades. Do not imagine that only the manual workers are fed up with the class system. Many of us who could be described as belonging to " comfortable " layers in the social formation have long felt and fought against the harsh unreality of the distinction between these layers few in number and the vast quantity which exist beneath the low-water mark of what comfort means to us. We have long resented the invidious fencing off of certain elements of the population as if there were real differences between men of varying conditions; we know well that the only real differences are between men as men. These things moved us to protest, set us to work, where work was possible; turned our thoughts definitely towards Reconstruction.

* * * *

Often the most obstinate opposition to a

Reconstructed State has been offered by those whom it would most benefit. Often help which would have been gladly given by the "comfortable" has been suspiciously, even scornfully refused. The British Labour Party is the only one which until lately limited its membership as far as possible, and its representation almost entirely, to men who have worked with their hands. But we have helped notwithstanding. Here was the only cause which gave us inspiration, the only politics worth thinking about. All who had eyes to see and ears to hear knew that the Ruling Class, after struggling to bear its burden manfully for a long period, had become a mockery and a peril. The burden had become too heavy for back and shoulders enervated by easy and luxurious lives. Too small a choice was open when it was necessary to name men for high office; and, as I have shown, the recruits taken into the Ruling Class too quickly assumed the manners and the airs which they found prevailing in it.

Its motto was "United we stand, divided we might fall"; therefore it set its face against folly or incompetence meeting its just reward.

When a holder of office failed too conspicuously he was shielded from disgrace, even from censure. He was given some other office, or put into the House of Lords.

"Never let anyone down," was their self-protecting principle. They cared not how the interest of the country might suffer, so they were safe. Suffer it did, disastrously. We saw social and political chaos approaching. The cause was plain. Those of us who had seen much of a different life in Canada, Australia, the United States, had long ago learned to detest the artificial barriers sustained in slowly moving England by stagnant prejudice. Now we saw in them danger as well.

CHAPTER IV.

THE COMFORTABLE MILLION OR SO.

> This is the history of all rebellions, social explosions in ancient or modern times. You have put the too Un-able man at the head of affairs. The too ignoble, unvaliant, fatuous man. You have forgotten that there is any rule or natural necessity whatever of putting the Able Man there.—*Carlyle, Heroes and Hero Worship.*

That danger fell upon us when Europe drifted into war. In peace our amateur rulers might count upon muddling through. War was a sterner test. War does not allow mistakes to be retrieved.

Pleasant, cultivated men our politicians, few of them so genuinely interested in the life of to-day as in the literature of the past. "Lunch at 10 Downing Street," wrote one of them in his Diary, "with A. J. Balfour. Talk about Greek, etc. Most pleasant." That lights up an epoch.

So "talking about Greek, etc.," they bound

us to certain action and refused to prepare for the fulfilment of their pledges. They played, as amateurs will, with the appearances of things; looked into still waters, declined to believe they ran deep. If the English were a vindictive people, they would hang every Minister who has held office in the past twenty years.

Before the middle of the nineteenth century, Charles Dickens wrote: "My faith in the people who govern us is, on the whole, infinitesimal. My faith in the people governed, is on the whole, illimitable." That must be the creed of all who can see things as they are to-day.

"But the people governed," you remark, "must be led. Where are the leaders to come from?"

They must come from all sorts and conditions of the people, and the people must watch them closely, must insist that all unnecessary branches of Government shall be lopped, must punish incapacity and idleness, must be sure of knowing clearly at all times what they are up to. There lies our only hope.

I hear many who all their lives have sneered at Labour and its claims now saying that in the Party of Labour, the Party which represents the mass of Englishmen and Englishwomen, not the Comfortable Class only, is our last chance. Labour might do better; it could not possibly do worse. And the state of Society which it seeks to create would be far more congenial to us than the reign of Interest and Incompetence which has brought the world to the madness and misery of this present hour.

* * * *

The "masses" trusted the "classes." The "classes" were unworthy of the trust and let them down. For all their boasted "superiority," their insolent assumption of being born to the best of everything, they have failed to throw up any governing man of more than mediocre strength and skill. For this the Eternal Justice will exact a penalty, and the only audible comment will be "Serve them right."

Hear Arnold Bennett on the Comfortable Million or so: it is a passage from one of the essays he published in "The New Age," when he and I were fellow contributors, a passage

I have read a dozen times with still-enlarging admiration for its truthful vigour—

"Three hundred and seventy-five thousand persons paid income tax last year, under protest; they stand for the existence of perhaps a million souls, and this million is a handful floating more or less easily on the surface of the forty millions of the population. . . . Their assured, curt voices, their proud carriage, their clothes, the similarity of their manners, all show that they belong to a caste and that the caste has been successful in the struggle for life. It is called the middle-class, but it ought to be called the upper-class, for nearly everything is below it. I go to the Stores, to Harrod's Stores, to Barker's, to Rumpelmeyer's, to the Royal Academy, and to a dozen clubs in Albemarle Street and Dover Street, and I see again just the same crowd, well fed, well dressed, completely free from the cares which beset at least five-sixths of the English race. They have worries; they take taxis because they must not indulge in motor cars, hansoms because taxis are an extravagance, and omnibuses because they really must economise.

But they never look twice at two-pence. They curse the injustice of fate, but secretly they are aware of their luck. When they have nothing to do, they say, in effect, 'Let's go out and spend something.' And they go out. They spend their lives in spending. They deliberately gaze into shop windows in order to discover an outlet for their money. You can catch them at it any day.

"Chief among the characteristics of this class—after its sincere religious worship of money and financial success—I should put its intense self-consciousness as a class. The world is a steamer in which it is travelling saloon. Occasionally it goes to look over from the promenade deck at the steerage. Its feelings towards the steerage are kindly. But the tone in which it says 'the steerage' cuts the steerage off from it more effectually than many bulkheads. You perceive also from that tone that it could never be surprised by anything that the steerage might do. Curious social phenomenon, the steerage! In the saloon there runs a code, the only possible code, the final code; and it is

observed. If it is not observed, the infraction causes pain, distress. Another marked characteristic is its gigantic temperamental dullness, unresponsiveness to external suggestion, a lack of humour—in short, a heavy and half honest stupidity; ultimate product of gross prosperity, too much exercise, too much sleep. Then I notice a grim passion for the *status quo*. This is natural. Let these people exclaim as they will against the structure of society, the last thing they desire is to alter it. This passion shows itself in naive admiration for everything that has survived its original usefulness, such as sail-drill and uniforms. Its mirror of true manhood remains that excellent and appalling figure, the Brushwood Boy. The passion for the *status quo* also shows itself in a general defensive sullen hatred of all ideas whatever. You cannot argue with these people. 'Do you really think so?' they will politely murmur, when you have asserted your belief that the earth is round, or something like that. And their tone says, 'Would you mind very much if we leave this painful sub-

ject? My feelings on it are too deep for utterance? '

"I do not belong to this class by birth. Artists very seldom do. I was born slightly beneath it. But by the help of God and strict attention to business I have gained the right of entrance into it. I admit that I have imitated its deportment, with certain modifications of my own; I think its deportment is in many respects worthy of imitation. I am acquainted with members of it; some are artists like myself; a few others win my sympathy by honestly admiring my work; and the rest I like because I like them. But the philosopher in me cannot, though he has tried, melt away my profound and instinctive hostility to this class. Instead of decreasing, my hostility grows. I say to myself: 'I can never be content until this class walks along the street in a different manner, until that now absurd legend has been worn clean off its forehead.' Henry Harland was not a great writer, but he said, '*Il faut souffrir pour être sel.*' I ask myself impatiently, 'When is this salt going to begin to suffer?' That is my attitude towards the class."

* * * *

Indignation savage as Bennett's is a mood. But it is a mood which has forced itself more and more frequently upon more and more people within the last fifty years or so. Coleridge, afterwards Lord Chief Justice, wrote in 1862 of "the profligate and wasteful ways of the English aristocracy," of "his detestation for their character and influence." Matthew Arnold, especially in "Friendship's Garland," that penetrating prophecy of our present discontents, strove to awaken England to a sense of approaching danger. "An aristocracy has no ideas, but it has a policy—to resist change." And he flayed even more mercilessly the Middle Class which in its blind conceit loved to style itself "the backbone of the country."

> "To be consequent and powerful men must be bottomed on some vital idea or sentiment which lends strength and certainty to their action. Your middle class has no such foundation; hence its imbecility. Your middle class have no great, seriously and truly conceived end, therefore no greatness of soul or mind, therefore no steadfastness or power in great affairs."

Swinburne had too piercing a poetic vision not to be aware of the truth. Arnold, he wrote, "strove to purge his countrymen of the pestilence of provincial thought and traditions, of blind theory and brute opinion, of all that hereditary policy of prejudice which substitutes self-esteem for self-culture, self-worship for self-knowledge, which clogs or enervates all powers and motions of the mind with a hard husk of mechanical conceit." Swinburne was at one with Arnold in holding that "the work of this era is the work of making human life, hampered by a past which it has outgrown, natural and rational." Carlyle, Mill, Meredith, Kingsley, all whose vision pierced the rosy mist of self-satisfaction, largely due to good living and field sports, in which the Ruling Class enwrapped itself, warned England that unless this work were accomplished, evil days awaited her. The evil days have come upon us. The work is still waiting to be done.

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George Gissing, whose novels are worth re-reading in spite of his stilted phrasing, made one of his characters ("Born in Exile") say,

"The task of the modern civiliser is to sweep away sham idealism." That fits the case exactly.

The Comfortable Million and the Ruling Class drawn from it are sham idealisms. They have idealised themselves.

"Believe me, my dear feller, soldiers much prefer to be led by *gentlemen*."

"Depend upon it, when the House of Commons ceases to be an assembly of *gentlemen*, this country will go to the dogs."

That sums up their fatuous mentality. But they could not have imposed themselves upon their unfortunate country if they had not been idealised by the other millions. They have been ticketed at their own value. They have been allowed to bluff their fellow-countrymen with blandly impudent testimonials to each other.

When Mr. Asquith described Mr. Austen Chamberlain (debate on Mesopotamia Report, July 13, 1917) as "a great and rare administrator," there should have gone up a cry of derision. No need to deny that Mr. Chamberlain has administrative ability such as would fit him to be a competent second in command

of a public office, but "great" and "rare" are epithets of fanciful exaggeration.

Yet those who are "in the know" wink at one another and keep up the fiction that politicians are pre-eminently gifted, intellectual, hard-working and business men, while those who are not "in the know" defer humbly to this fantastic estimate, not understanding that it is all part of the game between the two Old Gangs to humbug the crowd.

Why was not Lord Curzon's defence of the traffic in honours on the ground that "peerages were a great safeguard to public life" greeted with the stern rebuke which it deserved? Because Lord Curzon, because peerages, are "sham idealisms."

When those who offer themselves for election to Parliament are sharply cross-examined by electors at meetings instead of being listened to with bovine vacuity of mind while they pour out a flood of mechanical oratory about matters which commonly they do not understand at all, then we shall be better able to get on with the work of the age. We shall be opening up the region of the natural and rational when we apply all round the double-

edged dictum of Lord Balfour of Burleigh contained in the sentence :—

> "It is impossible to abolish poverty. There must and ought to be poor. If no one is allowed to become extremely poor, many people would do no work at all."

Could any words better illustrate "the lack of humour, the gigantic temperamental dullness, the heavy and half-honest stupidity" of Arnold Bennett's description? How could the retort not be foreseen that "many people do no work at all" now, and that, if this be so great an evil, they should be "got after" without delay? "Ah, but that is different," would be the rejoinder.

"You cannot argue with these people." Have we not all proved this true? You cannot argue with them. But you can push them aside.

CHAPTER V.

THE ARTIFICIAL GULF.

. . . . Then Christ sought out an artisan,
A low-browed, haggard, stunted man,
And a motherless girl whose fingers thin
Brushed from her faintly want and sin.
These He set the midst of them,
And as they drew back their garments' hem
For fear of defilement, 'Lo here,' said He,
The images ye have made of me.'

—*James Russell Lowell.*

Revolution predicates neither violence and civil warfare nor the changing of any fundamental laws.

It will mean, in one direction, the disappearance of the Ruling Class; in another, a transvaluation of values which have been current in respect of the services that men render one another.

Why has work done with sinews and tools been considered as justly payable upon a standard far lower than that which governs pay-

ment for "brain-work"? The cause is not to be found complete in the law of demand and supply. It has happened at divers times and places that the supply of a certain kind of labour, say that of plumbers or gardeners, has been short. Yet the wages of plumbers and gardeners did not rise. This was because the workers with hands as well as heads accepted with docility the low standard of payment for their services which had come to be regarded as fixed, and the low standard of living which was consequent upon this.

Fictitious values were set upon black-coat occupations. A boy beginning as a bank clerk would receive £60 or £70 a year. A boy carpenter would be told he was lucky if he earned fifteen shillings a week by the time he was nineteen or twenty. Yet the supply of boys apt for banking business was illimitable; and the capacity required to make a good carpenter is by far greater than that which suffices a clerk.

These fictitious values were the result of the gulf fixed between classes, between the Million or So of Arnold Bennett's description, together

with those other few millions who try to be like them, and the mass of the People. Between the "gentleman" and the "working man." Between the clerk and the labourer.

* * * *

An artificial gulf. A distinction based, not upon relative usefulness, nor upon relative moral elevation, nor, Heaven knows, upon relative intellectual vigour. The amiable Lord Nunehain observed, while he was still Mr. Lewis Harcourt, that he did not believe Socialism would ever be adopted because it would fail "to give a deserved reward to intellectual superiority."

What variety of Socialism Mr. Harcourt had in mind, or what Socialism would do if it were adopted, I cannot say. But it is clear that these words, applauded by a Yorkshire audience, condemned utterly the system which gave the speaker £5,000 a year as a Minister of State, while countless numbers of his intellectual superiors were earning not more than a fiftieth part of that salary.

The reason why Mr. Harcourt dreaded Socialism, and why the Comfortable Million

all dread it, and why the other millions who ape the Comfortable do not consider it "respectable" or "gentlemanly" is that they fear it might reduce the "rewards" of what they comically call their "intellectual superiority" and increase the earnings of working men "who really don't deserve any more and would only spend it in the public house if they got it."

Here is the root of bitterness. Here is the pregnant seed of discontent and . . . Revolution. If the Ruling Class although governing feebly and without foresight, had given itself no airs, it might have stirred no anger. If it had ruled wisely, the masses on the other side of the gulf might have allowed its superiority. It is the combination of misrule with an irritating and unwarranted assumption of superiority that has aroused fierce resentment. The man who works with his hands can espy no reason why he should be treated as an "inferior." Servants watch their masters and mistresses for any quality which should entitle them, not only to live in ease and luxury, but to vaunt themselves of finer clay.

The growth of the unnatural and irrational illusion that there are two orders of mankind and womankind, one above stairs and the other below, should be investigated by some student of morbid psychology. I know of an old lady —she is not many years dead—who referred habitually to her servants as "the creatures of the lower regions." I recall another who positively refused to allow a parlour-maid to wear a "fringe" when "fringes" were being worn; and a third who declared she could see no incongruity in a breakfast of several hot dishes being served to the dining room, while tea and bread and dripping constituted kitchen fare. Similar symptoms of the illusion could be diagnosed in numberless households still. Another is furnished by the difficulty which hinders frank conversation between the "well to do" and the "poor" (all being grouped under the "poor" heading who wear working clothes and whose work makes their hands dirty). No such difficulty is known in Canada, or the United States. It is a consequence of our being hampered "by a past which we have outgrown."

How many Englishmen ever discuss the world

and the age with their servants, their gardeners, their coachmen, those who labour in their factories, those who build their houses? They would have more light on tough problems, if they did. Very few o'erleap the barrier, few care to bridge the gulf with good sense and brotherly feeling.

In the matter of domestic service the general sentiment has of late been changing, as in many other directions. One reason for this is that, while employers could formerly impose their own terms upon their servants, it is now the servants who lay down conditions and fix wages. Small blame to them if they should make the most of this, their first chance of free bargaining, as some did in Russia after the Revolution, declining to work after eight o'clock in the evening, or to begin before they had had breakfast, raising their wages by half or more, and demanding that they should be addressed by the Russian equivalent of our Mr., Mrs. and Miss. But our domestic servants are most of them too good-natured and considerate to stretch their power to its full extent. The debt we owe to them for their cheerful and laborious

smoothing of the pathway of our daily lives would remain a heavy one even if they were well paid and comfortably circumstanced. Save in large houses, they are not well paid; their conditions of life are often mean and comfortless.

"According to *our* standard," I hear an objector protest, "but not according to *theirs*."

When we have "made human life more natural and rational" there will be but one standard.

* * * *

Nothing could be more insolent or inhuman than the deliberate railing off of the greater number of our fellow creatures from the pleasures and conveniences which we consider essential to our own well being. Absurdly irrational, too, if we reflect upon the uncertain tenure of our lives, the ignorance as to our coming hither and our going hence, the shortness of our stay, the oblivion which swallows up all men and their works, the probability that the human race is regarded by higher organisms as we regard ants, industrious but

futile, ever busy without knowing why or leaving any monument of their labour.

Look at a swarming ant-hill, think how we should smile if we learned that the ants observed social distinctions, that the fat and lazy looked down upon those who toiled for scanty rations and plumed themselves upon being of more delicate, more honourable make up. "Ridiculous!" we should exclaim. "As if there could be any real differences among these little animals which all look alike and have the same constitution and framework."

Humanity, *de te fabula*! Not less ridiculous than would be those of ants are the pretensions of monarchies, aristocracies, Middle Classes, Castes, privileged orders, *couches sociales* (existent throughout society, the poorest not exempt). Such pretensions were the laughing stock of intelligent folk, even while the Mass supposed itself to be of baser sort, and therefore not entitled to the same advantages as the comfortable few. That age has passed, that supposition faded, largely through the decay of the belief, sedulously exploited by the Ruling

Class, that in a future life the inequalities of this world would be evened up.

Now when a man professes to discern any superiority conferred by long descent, by long ancestral enjoyment of authority and ease, by accumulated lands or money, he writes himself down a blockhead, empty alike of biology, psychology and common sense. In persons who have been but lately jumped up from among those whom they now regard as "inferiors" such a pretension caricatures itself. Yet frequently it is these new arrivals who are extreme in the insistence upon "class distinctions."

* * * *

Once more I repeat, it is the barrier set up in the thoughts and in the behaviour of "gentlefolks" between themselves and the "lower orders" which embitters the great, patient, struggling uncomfortable mass of the proletariat. Here is another version of Arnold Bennett's indictment from the mouth of a working man, quoted by a correspondent of *The Times* newspaper eight years ago, "a working man who was not a Radical, but an active Conservative untouched by Socialist

propaganda, a man who reads almost exclusively the cheaper Conservative newspapers."

"Suppose their education did cost 'em more. . . . They had the money, hadn' 'em, or their fathers had? Do 'ee think *my* chil'ern couldn't be educated up to it if I had the money? They says their sort of work's worth more'n ours; p'raps 'tis: but wi'out our labour they wouldn't live at all. 'Tis the fruits of our labour they lives on an' the little you gets they grudges 'ee.

"They tells 'ee you don't have to live expensive. Course you don't! They says you an't got no position to keep up. Course you an't! Nor not always enough to eat neither. You can't afford it. Tisn't that us wants what they got, but us do want to be able to live a little bit thereafter. Us bain't book learnt, but I'm hanged if us don't know life.

"An' yet they looks down on 'ee, an' treats 'ee like the scum of the earth, 'cause you does what they can't—labours. *Dirty*! they call 'ee, 'cause you can't afford a nice house an' servants to keep it clean. *Rough*!

because you wears working clothes an' swears a bit. *Drunkard*! 'cause you has a glass too much once in a way—as if they don't have it too in their private houses. *Loafer*! because you chucks up the game, which you knows you can't win anyhow. *Scoundrel*! *Criminal*! when you're drove beyond yourself an' smashes up your happy home or brings the police down on 'ee. Lord! if a chap had their money an' summat to fall back on. . . .

"You works an' slaves an' worries an' never gets no far'arder. You do get five bob a week to die on, come you'm seventy, if you ever are. An' the likes o' they, they lords it over 'ee, 'cause they got the coin. An' when you tries to explain yourself, they cross-examines 'ee, an' twistis 'ee up in knots, 'cause they've been able to buy the education for to do it with. An' when you'd like to tell 'em how you feels, you've got to bite your tongue, 'cause the coin's at their disposal. An' who the hell be 'em? We was all born the same way, wasn't us? An'll all be buried, an' us all wants to live?"

"*Not Socialist rant,*" avouched the writer in *The Times*, "*but the every day talk of hard-working men who have never come into contact with Socialism.*" I could well believe it. I know many such, though they mostly adopt a more good-humouredly cynical tone.

* * * *

"'Tis bound to come, I tell 'ee," was the conclusion of the whole matter. "They'm giving this here education to kids what an't got nothin' for to back it up, an' that don't make 'em no happier, nor no more satisfied with the job they got to do. If you'm educated, you want to be able to live educated: an' the likes o' us can't. Us an't got the rivets (money). But the likes o' they there starch-collar articles, what tries to lord it over 'ee, an' shoves 'ee off with what pay they'm minded, they bain't going to always have it all their own way. Our sort of people's getting more enlightened, an' they travels about an' sees more, an' one of these days they'm going to inquire into it proper: an' when they do there'll be a bigger bust-up than ever was—you see!"

That was a fair warning eight years ago. To-day the big bust up is upon is. The war, and the incapacity of ruling men everywhere revealed by their conduct of war, have hastened its coming. Men who never reflected before have been forced to ponder and to ask "Why?"

When those who have been accustomed to consider their social arrangements as fixed and unalterable begin to ask "Why?" changes are not far off.

CHAPTER VI.

THE AIM OF LIVING—LIFE OR DEATH?

> The pale pathetic peoples still plod on
> Through hoodwinkings to Life.
> —*Thomas Hardy*, "*The Dynasts.*"

Why does the cry go up among all peoples, "There must be no more war"?

"Because war is cruel and stupid," you say. "Because those who fight do not fight for their own advantage, nor for the advantage of their nations, but to increase the dignity and revenues of rulers and statesmen, to make kings emperors, and add to their domains. Because in the quarrels of rulers the best blood of nations is shed, and misery brought into homes without number, only that in after years the world may say, 'How foolish and unnecessary the sacrifice was.'"

Yes, those are sound reasons. But those reasons have been advanced before. So far back as we have record of man's thought, the protest against war has been raised, and has been echoed in the hearts of men and women. Yet wars have continued.

Why is it that now the iron has entered more deeply into the soul of peoples? Why is the protest louder, and the resolve to end war sterner, more purposeful?

Is it not because the world has discovered that *there need be no more war?*

Is it not because they know now that Life can be anything that they, the Peoples, choose to make it?

Is it not because the Peoples have begun to understand that Life is not a mechanism so arranged that it can only work in a certain fixed way?

That is the true Democracy, the true Rule of the People, showing its bright face at length after many false Democracies have aped its beauty and brought discredit upon its name.

* * * *

If the object of Life is to live, and not to die, then war is an enemy which man must trample underfoot.

There have been ages in which diseases were regarded with dull resignation as necessary evils, scourges sent by God. We have broken with that tradition. We refuse to accept them as part of the mechanism of life. We have discovered the causes of many diseases. Some have been wholly, others partly, conquered. The rest we shall conquer.

In the past it was held that plague, small pox, scrofula, could not be got rid of. The future will ask with amazement how it could ever have been thought impossible to get rid of war.

There have been ages when it was taught, and by many believed, that the object of Life was not to live, but to die. In those ages it was asserted that what befell us here on earth was unimportant, that those who died were more fortunate than those who lived on. This was never believed save by a few fanatics, but so long as it was the general profession of

belief, protests against war could be no more than cries in the wilderness.

Crafty rulers took advantage of this paralysing creed. Weak rulers bowed to it. Men sacrificed their lives for faiths at which the next age smiled. Lands were ravaged in the interest of doctrines that have now faded out of mind.

When wars of religion ceased, another fetish was set up, a Moloch, claiming victims, not for the glory of God any longer, but in the name of National Greatness. Still the Peoples were deceived.

Mothers sought to comfort themselves for lost sons, wives for dead husbands, by hugging the cold delusion that their country was the greater, though usually, after an interval, short or long, it is agreed that all the lives sacrificed were thrown away needlessly upon a folly or a crime.

Men continued to kill and to be killed by other men with whom they had no quarrel, in order that their rulers might be exalted, though invariably, when this object was gained, they

found themselves more heavily burdened with taxation than they were before.

The increase of a country's "greatness" means almost always that a few grow richer, whilst the many become poorer. Yet to help the few on the road to riches, and to give their rulers a prouder position, the many rush "to their graves like beds," in Hamlet's phrase.

* * * *

So long as these delusions cloud the intellect of man, so long must wars continue. But these delusions are passing, even as the religious fury passed.

We are forming a fresh conception of national greatness. We see that it is not to be compassed by vastness of territory or by force of armaments; not by forcing rule upon unwilling subjects nor by bullying weaker neighbours; not by volume of commerce, not by wealth.

Only those nations can be great which honour justice, and which love freedom; which seek the happiness of all as the highest good; which

by wise laws and sound administration allow to all equal opportunities for the development of such capacity as they possess; which scorn to exercise sovereignty by force over vassal provinces; and which desire to live at peace with all the world.

President Wilson described the attitude of a great nation when he said of the United States:

> "We are the true friend of all nations because we threaten none, covet the possessions of none, and desire the overthrow of none. Therein lies our greatness."

Every year it becomes more and more unthinkable that a free nation should make war for lust of power, territory, or commerce.

It is true that Britain and France not many years ago came almost to blows over a disputed swamp in Africa, and that civil war was on the point of breaking out in Ireland in 1914. Of the former quarrel the Peoples in France and Britain knew nothing. Had they been consulted in cool blood they would certainly have brushed aside the notion of war. In Ireland the cause of enmity was traceable

first to England's centuries of effort to treat Ireland as a vassal province; secondly to the folly of Ministers in attempting to force the remedial measure upon a million Irish people who did not want it.

In each case politicians muddled matters in their blundering self-seeking way so that the real issues were hidden beneath specious shams.

The same muddling led to the war between Britain and the Boers in South Africa. President Kruger represented to the Boers that Britain sought to steal their country. British politicians played his game by bluffing and blustering instead of appealing to reason and giving reason time to sink into the Boer mind.

Would the Boers have fought if they had known that in fifteen years' time they would be forming part of a United South Africa on equal terms with the British, and that the Prime Minister of this United South Africa would be a Boer?

If the British People had realised that the aim in view was the creation of a South African Union with self-governing rights, rights which

would be granted to Briton and Boer alike, would they not have said that it was monstrous to waste their young men's lives upon merely hastening a consummation which would certainly arrive in course of time?

Those queries answer themselves.

* * * *

Free nations will not make aggressive war—no, not though politicians muddle and misrepresent. Wars between them can never arise unless each party thinks the other has aggressive designs. That misunderstanding must be prevented by the Peoples themselves. No nation ever wished for war until its mind had been tricked and its anger roused by lies. No nation can be free while it is still liable to be so enchained.

Wars there may be in defence of freedom. Wars there will be with nations outside the rank of the civilised, nations which will hear no argument but that of force. Such wars are regrettable. They may be, if you choose to use the term, wrong; only the hypocritical or the unduly hopeful can profess to believe that the world will know them no more.

But of wars between nations, between Peoples which acknowledge the same standards, which interchange thoughts and expressions of emotion as well as the products of their soil and handiwork, which profess allegiance to the same creeds—of such wars, if we will it so, there need be no more.

War means the cutting short of lives which might be lived out in enjoyment of love and duty, of toil and pleasure, of the world's infinitely varied charm and interest. War brings misery upon women, hardship to orphaned children, grief and a sense of meaningless bereavement into almost every heart.

Sometimes I have thought, "Perhaps we exaggerate the pitifulness of war." Death in battle is not, in itself, dreadful. It is often sudden; it may befall when the blood is hot; seldom is any pang felt. Even the suffering of the wounded is more easily to be faced than the horror of a lingering agony in the grip of some atrocious disease.

When we turn away sick at heart from casualty lists, from the sad record of those killed in action, the thought may occur to us,

"There were the same long strings of names, there was the same mourning and weeping in the Crimea (to go no further back than sixty years). Now those who mourned have died or have forgotten their pain. Nothing is left of it; it has passed like a bubble on a swift flowing stream. And so it has been through all the ages, each has mourned and been swept away. Do we do well to pay heed to these lamentations over the victims of war?

Again we must ask ourselves these questions: "Do you look upon Life as a mechanism, or do you believe that we can make it what we choose? Do you say that the object of Life is to live, or to die?"

Surely you will answer that the object of life is to live, to make the most of our energy, to count life well worth the keeping, so long as we do not cling to it as those who fear to die. Death with honour kept bright is far above life with shame, but free nations must be well satisfied that honour is in question before they will make war. Seldom do wrongs press so heavily upon nations as to be unbearable without striking a blow.

* * * *

Next after the pitifulness of war comes its troublesomeness, and this supplies another set of reasons for ending it. War is the universal meddler. His red finger is thrust into every pie. Apart from the suffering and damage which are inseparable from war, irritation and loss are caused by the chief business of existence being handed over to stupid and tyrannical men.

War brings to the surface all the folly that resides in human nature, and lets it rampage unchecked. Officialism of the most venomous species is encouraged to play fantastic tricks. No individual rights are respected. Orders are given and liberty disappears.

Politicians in a state of spluttering fury strive to convince their own and neutral nations that they were not to blame. Commanders of armies issue bulletins announcing all their successes and none of their defeats. The People permit themselves to be treated as if they were imbeciles or savages who will swallow every absurdity and to whom it would be dangerous to tell, with manly candour, the truth.

On each side fantastic atrocity stories are

related. Very often these are exact replicas one of the other. At first they are encouraged by leading men. They create panic. I have seen whole populations of small towns and villages on the march, fleeing from the imaginary cruelties of their country's foe. Then leading men discourage them. The word goes round to spread them no more.

That is an example of "the creation of opinion." It is impossible to oppose such folly. It is unsafe to keep a steadily-balanced mind. Any man who refuses to be deceived by stories which are generally accepted is liable to abuse and insult. If any Christian were bold enough to preach Christianity in war-time, he would be solemnly tried and shot.

Standards of right and wrong are altered. Kind-hearted people gloat over massacres and wholesale drownings. Savage acts which at any other time would cause disgust are described with chuckles of satisfaction by men, and by women too, who would be afraid to kill a bird.

In all departments of life the Government interferes more. The Freedom of Life departs.

What people may do and may not do is laid down for them. Fussiness delights in causing the greatest possible sum of trouble.

* * * *

Inter arma silent leges ran the Latin aphorism. "War suspends law." It suspends many other of our safeguards. It says to Liberty, "Wear chains"; to Reason, "Be Silent"; to Religion, "Forget God."

The Romans kept the doors of the Temple of Janus, their double-faced god, open whenever they were at war, closed during peace. It might be wise, so long as war lasts, to close all our Churches, and only to open them when their precepts are not being so openly flouted.

Violent contrasts between principles and practice in the life of civilised nations are dangerous. If wars continue amongst civilised peoples, principles will fall into contempt, civilisation will perish.

It is no longer possible to persuade nations that certain actions can be wrong at one time and right at another; that divine law is above human, but that human law may at any moment

over-ride the divine. If "Might is Right" and "Killing no Murder" become familiar maxims, depend upon it they will be acted upon in peace and among private persons, as well as among nations at war.

But chiefly and above all other reasons, I find the reason for the universal outcry that war is insanity, that war is unnecessary, that wars must cease, in the knowledge now more widely diffused than ever before that wars benefit the rulers of states and never bring anything save misery to the People; that by wars more than by any other agency the desire of the People to make existence natural and rational has been defeated, and the extravagant pretensions of Ruling Classes deplorably increased.

CHAPTER VII.

THE END OF KINGLY RULE.

Popular Government will stop war.—*The Prince Consort in 1851.*

If war, then, is one of the chief means by which the People are kept in subjection to and exploited by rulers and ruling classes, war must be abolished before that subjection and exploitation can be made to cease.

But how is it possible to abolish war?

Let us see if we can answer that by examining how other customs and institutions have been abolished.

How, for example, was slavery abolished? For thousands of years, ever since Man had written history or left his handiwork to tell it for him, slavery had been regarded by the mass of mankind as part of the necessary mechanism

of life. From time to time protests were raised against it. All that the mass of mankind said was, "Very dreadful it seems, when you look at it like that. But what can we do? *We* did not invent slavery. It has always existed. It always will exist. It is no use talking about it."

Yet the heart of mankind was influenced by the protesters more than it knew. At last mankind said, "Yes, they are right. It is an abomination. It must go." Slavery ceased because the world ceased to believe it necessary. Opinion killed it.

Human sacrifices, fights between men and men, or between men and beasts in the arena, the burning and torturing of men and women by the Church for the crime of daring to question its doctrines—all these and other crimes against the happiness of mankind were once spoken of just as we once spoke of slavery, just as we speak of war to-day. They were called painful necessities. When people ceased to consider them necessities, they ceased to exist.

Duelling died by the same process. Personal combat was not entirely an evil. It caused slanderous tongues to keep silence from fear. In certain events it added dignity to the relations between man and man. It gave no security that right would triumph over wrong, but neither does law. On balance, however, duelling was seen to be an inefficient, uncertain, unjust method of settling disputes. Slowly its foolishness was borne in upon the minds of men. Then it ceased.

* * * *

So it may hap with war. So it will hap, if we disabuse our thoughts of the belief that wars must be. So long as we say "War is pitiful, war is insane, war brings to us, the People, much suffering and no benefit, but war is an evil which we cannot cure," so long wars will continue. Opinion will cause their continuance.

The acceptance of war as an evil which we cannot cure is based in most men's minds upon the conviction that "force is the dominant factor in human affairs." Even so shrewd an intellect as that of the famous Lord Dufferin

went astray here. The words I have just quoted are his words.

They are, of course, true. The world is ruled by force; always has been; probably always will be. But *not always by force applied in the same way.*

There was a time when individuals who had a great deal of force did as they pleased with the persons and property of those who had less force. But this predominance of individual force gave place to the authority of communal force.

Communities banded themselves together for mutual protection. They agreed to use their united force against those who broke communal rules. The use of force was thenceforward forbidden to individuals. It was vested in the Police. Force remained the "dominant factor in human affairs," but now force was applied in a different way.

It is said sometimes that public order and public safety depend, not upon Force, but upon respect for law. In one sense that is true. The power which is vested in the Police can only

prevail when the great majority respect law and uphold the police. Until opinion has come round to the view that the use of force by individuals is needless and unprofitable, there can be no establishment of communal force.

But even when respect for law is established among the great majority, force is still the dominant factor. No community has ever abolished the Polce. In every community there is a minority which respects nothing but force and against which Police protection is necessary.

* * * *

The growth of respect for law caused the era of individual force to give place to the era of communal force, but a vast machinery of judges, magistrates, prisons and policemen was required to enforce respect for law upon a large number of people.

The mere existence of this machinery suffices to make the law respected. So the mere knowledge that superior forces are ranged against it will suffice to prevent even the most warlike and aggressive oligarchy from drawing the sword.

It is not too much to say that Britain, if her statesmen had been resolute and bold, might have prevented the Franco-German war and the European War which, as a direct consequence of the other, broke out in 1914.

Had Britain in 1870 warned the Emperor of the French that if he provoked Germany to fight, Britain would fight with Germany, the Emperor would have abandoned his provocation and Bismark would not have had the opportunity of forcing a fight upon him at a moment when France was unprepared.*

If in 1914 Mr. Asquith and Lord Grey had responded to the appeal of the President of the French and had declared that Britain would aid France in the event of a conflict between France and Germany, as a result of the differences between Austria and Servia, Germany would, as President Poincaré believed, "have modified her attitude."

The show of force would have been enough in each case, as it is among individuals, who are ruled by that rather than by any innate

* See "Memoirs of Sir Robert Morier," chap. xxiii.

respect for law. When law superseded personal violence, force was not dethroned. It was regulated, in accordance with opinion which held such regulation to be not only desirable, but possible as well.

If war is to cease among civilised nations, it must be stopped by the same process as that which stopped war among individuals. This does not mean that Force will cease to be the dominant factor in international affairs. It only means that Force will be applied in a different way.

Never yet, when opinion has decreed both the desirability and the possibility of a change, have means been lacking to bring the change about. But no change has ever been made until the world believed that it could be made, in addition to holding that it ought to be made.

* * * *

Look back at history and we find it consists almost entirely of wars, first between tribes and villages, next between towns and small states, then between nations themselves. We find, on further examination, this also : that never have

wars been waged at the instance, or for the benefit, of the tribes, villages, towns or nations, but in the interest of their rulers.

All through the ages men and women have been deluded into thinking that war was not only necessary, but just and splendid and honourable. They have not considered their own advantage. They have not asked themselves: Have we any desire to fight with our neighbours? Can we gain anything by conflict? Is there any reason for war?

They have fought blindly, insanely. Their rulers have stirred up artificial hatreds; at the prick of manufactured passion they have abused one another as barbarians, as breakers of law and customs, as cruel and treacherous foes. While they are at war, they are unable to imagine a return of friendly relations. They think that for ever the feud will be kept up.

Yet as soon as fighting ceases, sometimes even before it ceases, their rulers are calmly bargaining, their generals are exchanging compliments, their statesmen are telling each other with placid shrugs and deprecating smiles how foolish it has all been. After a momentary

dazed astonishment, the nations which have sacrificed their best young lives and bent their backs beneath the burden of heavy payment, accept the new conditions and plod on, hoodwinked as before.

So history becomes what Gibbon called it, "a record of the crimes, follies and misfortunes of mankind." Only now are there signs that people are about to break the chain of habit, and, the scales dropping from their eyes, to see war as it is, a damnable farce acted for the profit or the pastime of governing men.

> "There is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so."

There is nothing needful or needless but as opinion proclaims it.

* * * *

Time was when opinion held that Divine Right entitled Kings to shape with irresponsible sway the destinies of their people. That peoples should rule themselves was laughed at as a fond imagining. Now in free countries it is the claim to Divine Right which causes laughter. No armed risings could have brought

about the change, no beheadings, no driving of monarchs into exile—nothing but opinion. When that alters, Divine Right dissolves into air, " and, like the baseless fabric of a vision, leaves not a wrack behind."

To put an end to war is only possible if mankind believes it to be possible. Further, that possibility depends upon opinion in all civilised countries denouncing, as a dangerous imposture, Divine Right.

So long as the People in any country consent to this imposture—consent to be ruled in the interest of sovereigns, instead of ruling themselves in their own interest, so long will wars be deliberately provoked.

They will be planned in order to add kingdom to kingdom, to increase the power and dignity of monarchs and their counsellors. They will be designed, when kingly power is failing, in order to restore dynastic prestige. They will be undertaken in times of internal discontent and disorder, so that the intoxication of misguided patriotism may cause domestic broils to be forgotten; wars will be used as

an obstacle to progress, as a bar against liberty, as an instrument for keeping the People in subjection and riveting the chains of tyranny upon their limbs.

* * * *

Man learns his lessons painfully. He seldom drops the hot iron until it has burned his hands. He lets the bodies of dead forms, once useful, rot and cause a pestilence.

Monarchy, the rule of one man, called King or Emperor or what you will, is amongst civilised nations a dead form of government. A small nation in an early stage of growth, when needs are simple and duties plain, submits easily to be ruled by one strong man. He makes the people's laws, settles disputes, leads them into battle. If under his rule they prosper, they willingly obey him. Should he lack vigour or betray their trust, they drive him out and choose another King.

As the nation's energies become more various, its modes of thinking more difficult to control, its relations with other kingdoms closer and more complex by reason of increased

numbers, the King calls in advisers. So government, as we know it, begins.

The advisers do not consider themselves advisers to the nation. They are the servants of the King. He engages and dismisses them as he pleases. They are concerned with the advancing of his interests, not of the people's welfare. That rarely enters into their thoughts.

The mind of the nation broadens. Its will seeks to express itself. It chafes against Kingly rule. Kingship has become hereditary. It is no longer an office held by the people's will or consent. The King is seldom a strong or able man. But a theory of Divine Right has been invented by lawyers and priests, who fawn upon the monarch, drawing from him their power and wealth. A race of courtiers has sprung up also which looks to the King for lands and offices.

The soil is the People's heritage no longer. Free men have become vassals, serfs. They have no part or lot in governing the land which was once theirs. They must pay taxes. They must fight and die in the King's quarrels.

When foes over-run the land, they suffer. Their wives and children are basely ill-used. Their houses are burned, their crops and orchards destroyed. Yet when the territory of neighbouring states is seized and added to their kingdom, they reap no benefit. It swells the revenue and puffs up the dignity of the King.

* * * *

So discontents are born, revolts plotted. The right of self-government comes to grips with the "divine right" of Kings. Far-seeing sovereigns acknowledge themselves the holders of a trust. Countries where, as in England, convenience is valued more highly than logic, advance step by step in the process of transferring power from King to people. Other countries are torn by violence and drenched in blood, as France was drenched and torn through the long agony of her Revolution, as Russia is being torn and drenched to-day.

Thus Commonwealths or Republic are erected upon the ruins of thrones. England is a Republic with a hereditary President. His influence depends upon his personality. His

usefulness lies in an age-long tradition of respect for the Throne: also in the avoidance of that conflict and that fruitless expense of energy which accompany elections to the Presidential Office.

Upon the men who claimed Divine Right and the foolish millions that admitted the claim lies the shame of towns destroyed and ravaged country-sides; of homeless wanderers in misery and want; of men slaughtered in droves and heaped in nameless graves; of hundreds of thousands maimed and shattered by the devilish instruments of scientific war. I have seen these pitiful sights in France and Russia, in Poland and Italy. I have had burned into my memory the hideous suffering and waste of wars waged by nations in arms.

The war has left behind it many seeds of change, some to germinate slowly, some to sprout up at once. The settled order in Europe has been broken up. It will never be restored in the same shape as before.

There will be seed-time and harvest, blossom-time and fruit-time, green quiet lanes for lovers to walk in, the chatter and patter of children's

tongues and toes. Nature will be a mother as beautiful as ever to those who love her in all moods. There will still be "the sun, moon and stars, brother; likewise the wind on the heath." But many things false and many things pompous will be sought in vain. Among them, shall we not count the foolish belief in Kingship, that dead form of government, lingering long behind the belief upon which it was founded, that only begetter of the world's most piteous and barbaric war?

CHAPTER VIII.

WHAT ARE NATIONAL INTERESTS?

If we only fought for our convictions, there would be an end of war.—*Tolstoi*, "*War and Peace*."

And when Kingship has gone? When Divine Right has been put away, along with witchcraft and miracles, in museum of curious beliefs. Will war then automatically cease?

By no means. It will not cease until the civilised world regards it in the same light as we now regard slavery and duelling and human sacrifice and the Inquisition and other crimes against human happiness. Nor will it cease so long as that which was the most fruitful cause of wars between Divine Right Kingdoms is allowed to poison relations between free peoples; so long as "national greatness" is made the aim of government, instead of the

well-being of all the individuals who compose the nation.

Not only the Ministers and Ambassadors of Sovereigns, but also the statesmen of free nations are apt to set before themselves the misguided ideal which Prince Gortchakoff, the Russian statesman, confessed to following, the ideal of "increasing his country's position and prestige."

That is the ideal, whether they express it openly or not, of all Ruling Classes. Thereby we see both why they are so clumsy, and how twisted from its true purpose is the theory of good government.

To imagine that the men and women of any country desire for it "position and prestige" in Prince Gortchakoff's meaning would be to misunderstand human nature. Here and there accident may produce in any nation writers of unbalanced judgment, like those who held that "just as the greatness of Germany is to be found in the governance of Germany by Prussia, so the greatness and good of the world are to be found in the predominance there of

German culture, of the German mind—in a word, of German character."

Such lunacy—for it is lunatic to wish the whole world reduced to one level of ideals and ideas—does not make any impression upon nations. But it does appeal to sovereigns, to soldiers, and to Ruling Classes. It is by them that the desire for national glory is cherished.

* * * *

Let us strip national glory of its tinsel and see what there is underneath.

Suppose a man were to proclaim that his object in life was to increase the position and prestige of his family. He would be voted a pompous ass, or else pitied as being not entirely sane.

Suppose he endeavoured to compass this object by doing all he could to injure other families, to set them at enmity, so that they might weaken one another, to damage their business and stand in the way of their advancements?

Suppose, further, that in the struggle for

position and prestige all members of his family, except its heads, became poorer and had to resign themselves to losing sons and husbands, or seeing them come home maimed and broken men. Even if the madman's family bore with him, what would the community say?

He would quickly fall, would he not, into the hands of the law? He would be accounted, not only a nuisance, but a danger; he would be locked up.

Yet statesmen who practise such methods and avow such aims are honoured as great men. Is there not surprising inconsistency here?

Do not say impatiently, "The cases are altogether different," and so dismiss the enquiry. Think it out. I believe all will come to this conclusion—that the cause of the inconsistency can be traced to the survival among free nations of the old and damnable idea of government which belonged to Divine Right of Kings.

These Kings, with a very few exceptions,

devoted themselves to increasing their own countries—that is to say, their own positions and prestige. They were like owners of estates whose sole desire should be to extend their properties and who should take no pains to keep the people living on them healthy and content.

When in free countries the People took rule into their own hands, they ought to have made it clear that the object of ruling was thereby changed. No longer was statesmanship to be the art of making nations great. It was to be the science of making individuals happy. No longer was the energy of governing men to be directed towards the aggrandisement of an abstraction called "the country," but to the solution of the problems, concrete and painful enough we know, which weigh upon the lives of men and women.

Government may still have to concern itself with the relations of those men and women to the men and women of other countries; with what Lord Beaconsfield aptly called "home affairs in foreign parts." There must be a policy for the regulation of those affairs.

But the aim of foreign policy must not be to increase the "position and prestige" of an abstraction, "the country." It must be to increase the happiness of the men and women who really are the country.

* * * *

Bear with me if I seem to labour this distinction. It is a distinction which must be kept very clearly in mind if we are to discover the origins of wars and to decide whether it is possible to end them.

In modern times wars have nearly all arisen from the practice of speaking about the country's interest as if it were different from the interest of the men and women who inhabit the country. This practice is, among free nations, a legacy from the days of Divine Right rulers, in which "the country" had interests separate from those of its people, and not only separate from, but superior to them —I mean, the interests of its King.

One thing can be said with certainty. War never served the interest of any people. The mass of men and women have never drawn

any advantage from it. In no case can history show us that the men and women who in any war gave their lives and their children's lives, and lost their means of livelihood, and saw their houses destroyed, and into the bargain paid heavy taxes to meet new expenses, were ever considered when terms of peace came to discussion, or were in any way recouped for their sufferings and loss.

Sometimes nations have fought, as the Netherlands did against Spain, and as Belgium did against Germany, in defence of freedom and the right to call their land their own. Sometimes other nations took their part, as England took the part of Belgium. But in such wars nations do not fight for advantage. They know that they must suffer; they face suffering with a grim, sad resolve.

The need for such resolve arises seldom. It never could arise if there were no "divine right" monarchs, and if the guiding principle of government were to safeguard the happiness of men and women, not to increase the prestige and position of that abstraction, "the country," "the state."

The Peoples of free countries must instil this principle into those whom they choose to rule in their name. Nations do not covet, do not set their hearts upon domination, do not desire to increase their position and prestige. What they, the men and women who compose nations, desire is to live their lives in the way they choose, or as near to their choice as may be possible. And they are ready to grant to all others the same liberty.

* * * *

In short, free nations will never seek for Glory, as Kings do. Yet it is not safe to say that there will never be again among free peoples aggressive wars. For indeed all wars are represented to be aggressive wars. A German who knew the mind of Bismarck wrote in 1875 that the German Chancellor had "resolved to extricate himself from the complications at home by foreign action," but that it was not easy for him "to create a situation in which Germany seemed to be the attacked party." That is a necessary part of the war game as played by statesmen and diplomats. Each side must be able to complain that it was

attacked; usually the assertion is made that it was attacked unawares.

This is part of the process by which the people are deluded not only by rulers, but by statesmen. It is futile to trust to the dislike which free nations feel against aggression so long as they can so easily be deceived.

In the deciding of what touches national honour lies the most dangerous risk of war. Appeals to nations to take up arms on this ground meet with a dangerously ready response. Even free nations may be influenced to feverish violence by the folly of unstable or obstinate politicians, by the cunning of ambition or of greed.

In the days of duelling "honour" was made a fetish to which sacrifice of blood and life must be offered. To the same exaggeration have governing men, for purposes of their own, carried the worship of "country." When people are told that "the country's interest" demands this, that, or the other, they cannot check the assertions; they do not understand what is meant. They accept it because, if

they did not, they would be reviled as unpatriotic.

We cannot repeat to ourselves too often that no country can have any true interest save the interest of the men and women who belong to it. It is because nations overlook this that there is so often risk of war on account of "national honour."

* * * *

Danger often resides also in the extent to which governments, often for purposes of personal profit, support even with the authority of free nations the adventures of capital, the projects of contractors, the schemes of those who have money to lend or goods to sell.

It is impossible to suggest any rule for judging appeals to governments by individuals who consider that they have been wronged, and that through them their countries have been flouted. Every appeal of this nature must be judged upon its merits. For wanton unprovoked attacks redress and apology must be exacted. But to use the People's power to assist individuals to make money (even by fair

dealing, which in such operations is often lacking) is to betray the People's interest.

President Wilson has warned those citizens of the United States who engage in business in the countries of Central or South America that they do so at their own peril. He refused even to act sternly towards Mexico when upwards of two hundred American subjects had been killed there. His argument was: "These men knew Mexico was insecure. They went there to make money. It is not worth while sacrificing many thousands of lives to avenge them."

Is that a refusal to accept one of the duties of Government? Perhaps it is. But like refusals have been made by all the Powers, when they have had no interest in claiming compensation or inflicting punishment. President Wilson is the first ruler to say openly, "We renounce and abhor the practice of making war, either to vindicate national honour or for the support of business men." That is a significant sign.

I believe this view of President Wilson's

would be approved by almost everybody if it were presented to them individually and coolly. Yet it is an easy task for any public speaker to arouse enthusiasm for war upon these very grounds. Acts from which men and women would shrink as individuals may be committed by them when they lose their individuality and become merely units in a crowd.

Opinion must be so changed that crowds will listen to suggestions of war with the same impatience and the same puzzled astonishment as would be felt if an orator proposed to-day to burn "heretics" at the stake; to offer up human sacrifices; to abolish law courts and revive trial by personal combat or by the ordeal of walking over hot bricks.

* * * *

As soon as Opinion undergoes this change, as soon as it is agreed that national interests are the interests of individual men and women, wars will be near to ceasing. Then the oppression of nationalities will end. Then it will be considered as monstrous to refuse to any body of men and women the right to choose their own form of government (so that it be not

harmful to others) as it is considered monstrous now to fetter the freedom of individual men and women to choose their own ways of life.

When Italy was struggling to free herself from the grip of Austria, and of other barbarous incompetent rulers—a grip which was cramping and hateful to the Italian People—it was suggested that Lombardy should decide by a plebiscite whether she wished to remain under Austrian rule or not. Queen Victoria protested that "it would be a calamity for ages to come" if a People were allowed to choose its own form of government. To-day we stand astonished at her selfish indignation; selfish because she put the narrow views and interests of the Trade Union of Sovereigns before those of men and women. To-day we say that it is a calamity when Peoples are hindered from choosing their rulers and their form of government.

But it is not enough to say this. We must act accordingly. We must search our own hearts and ask ourselves if there be no beam in our own eye. We must spread the truth

that Government is a means, not an end in itself; that political systems were made for Man and not Man for any political system.

When these become commonplaces of thought, governments which enforce their rule upon millions of unwilling subjects will be tolerated no longer. Nor shall we permit those who rule over lands which have been freed to disturb the peace with their trumpery discords. The rulers of small half-civilised countries, like the countries in the Balkan Peninsula, will be sternly warned that their squabbles and covetings must cease. The Balkan Peoples would raise no protest. They have no interest in these petty schemings. If their rulers proved unruly, the Peoples should be invited to speak their will.

* * * *

The possibility of abolishing war depends, therefore, *first* upon the civilised nations ceasing to believe that war is a necessary evil; *secondly*, upon the transforming of Divine Right monarchies, which make war for their own selfish ends, into Republics or Limited

Monarchies in which the sovereign is a hereditary President, deriving his title from the People's will; *thirdly*, upon free nations abandoning the pursuit of prestige and position and forcing their elected governing men to govern solely with intent to increase the sum of human well-being and happiness; *fourthly*, upon all Peoples being at liberty to choose the form of government which they prefer. That will be the true Democracy.

* * * *

Hitherto the reasoners who hold that war cannot be ended have been allowed to ride off on too many unsound, tottering arguments which could be knocked from under them by a single blow, as this argument of "force the dominant factor" can be.

These reasoners have been used to declare, for example, that no nation could ever completely understand foreign politics. No nation completely understands finance, except in so far as it is affected by taxation. No nation understands completely its domestic politics. Yet these matters are admitted to fall within their province of decision. Even if nations

were incapable of understanding foreign politics, that would be no ground for declaring that they must leave this field to experts. They are not expected to follow that course in regard to legislation and finance.

But nations are not incapable of following foreign politics with intelligent interest. Every one can do so who takes the trouble to read a little history and knows his way about an atlas.

Foreign affairs are no more difficult to grasp than home politics. The only reason why nations fail to grasp them is that they are not explained to them in an intelligible way. Often the men who explain them do not understand them themselves.

In truth, the motives which govern rulers are simple enough, while the motives which govern Peoples are the same in all countries, and the *stimuli* to which they respond, the same also. The problems which arise out of the clash of rulers' ambitions and personalities could be stated to any public meeting as simply and clearly as those which arise out of the

struggles between Capital and Labour or the opposition between Protection and Free Trade.

But no speaker ever states them simply and clearly in popular form. The truth is never told to the People. They imagine that there is a mystery about foreign affairs which they need not hope to penetrate. That is why foreign affairs are so badly muddled in all countries. They are handled by men who misconceive the object of government, and who are allowed to work behind a curtain which is never lifted save when their muddling and misconception have brought upon their country the curse of war.

* * * *

No question of "national interest," no punctilio of "national dignity" can make it worth while for men to leave their homes, their work, their life, in order to become machines for slaughter and food for cannon. If they were persuaded to do this willingly, the deception would be cruel enough. To force it upon them, whether they will or not, is an outrage to which Mankind is surely not going always to submit.

"There were a good many causes predisposing us to the belief in the desirability of a League of Nations. One of these was that there must be a universal desire on the part of the labouring classes to avoid military service in the future. It could not be possible that the mass of mankind desired compulsory military service."—*Colonel Sir Mark Sykes, M.P., in the House of Commons, August 1st*, 1918.

There is nothing worth fighting for except the liberty to live in one's own way, and no people ever wishes to interfere with that liberty in any other people. It is only by ambitious rulers and statesmen, backed up by soldiers and by writers, whether of books or of newspaper articles, that such plots are hatched. Now the Peoples must refuse to be cozened any longer into supporting them by the sacrifice of everything they live for. They have been fooled long enough.

CHAPTER IX.

THE RIGHT KEY TO HISTORY.

Kings climb to eminence
Over men's graves.
—*Austin Dobson.*

Yet we dare not be too hopeful even now. In the age-long struggle of mankind towards the light and warmth of Freedom there have been many set-backs. False steps have been inadvisedly taken, false hopes kindled. Disappointment painful to bear has followed.

So often has this happened that there is excuse for those who doubt whether mankind can ever escape from bondage to one or other of those myriad shapes of fraud and superstition, of authority and dogma, whether self-imposed or clamped upon it by force, which have dogged its footsteps from the first syllables of recorded history.

History in my view of it is to be regarded as the record of man's struggles against these foes; against hallucinations affecting his judgment, efforts to enslave him, delusions deliberately fostered in order to exploit and plunder him, all the evils which have hindered him from leading a natural rational life.

Here, I suggest, is the key to the otherwise confused and unexplainable welter of events which History offers for our consideration. Read without any key, without any philosophy, these events are both puzzling and tedious. In one of Mr. Ian Colvin's witty, though barren, because merely sophistical, pamphlets ("Take Cover") he makes game of a Socialist clerk who "doesn't hold with history."

"Never took to it," says the clerk. "No large ideas, all confusion, wars, kings, treaties that mean nothing. What is the Norman Conquest to me or the Wars of the Roses? A jumble with no meaning in it."

That clerk put into words, perhaps in spite of his creator, just what all of us must at times have felt about history, if we have thought

about it at all. How should they feel otherwise who have no clue to its labyrinthine paths, leading in all directions without, as it seems to them, any common trend?

Many have tried to see in history a record of Progress. They can only succeed in this by turning a bright light first upon the uglier features of the Past, and then upon the fairer features of the Present. If we weigh as fairly as we can with our imperfect scales any one age against any other, we find the balance fairly even. Sometimes there are more cruelty, fraud, foolishness of certain kinds; sometimes there are less of these kinds and more of others. Against a larger bulk of admirable qualities in some directions must be set off a smaller bulk in other directions. So the mass results stand even. The total weights of good and bad remain much the same.

Progress, Nietzsche wrote, "is merely a modern idea, that is to say, a false idea." * Macaulay, whose wisdom struggled with his Whiggishness, like the sun bursting every now

* "Antichrist," p. 129. English translation, edited by Dr. Oscar Levy.

and then through murky clouds, said in his "Machiavelli":—

> "Every age and nation has certain characteristic vices. . . . Succeeding generations change the fashion of their morals with the fashion of their hats and their coaches, take some other kind of wickedness under their patronage, and wonder at the depravity of their ancestors."

Clever Disraeli, who fooled the simple English by playing down to their ignorance and their prejudices (as in his famous dismissal of Darwinism by the phrase "I am on the side of the angels"), could not in his earlier, honester years pretend to find any ground for believing that the world improved.

> "Enlightened Europe is not happy. Its existence is a fever which it calls Progress. Progress to what?" (*Tancred*, Book III., Chapter 7.)

When an archæologist tells us that the average child of Nineveh, seven centuries before Christ, was better educated than the average

child of to-day; when a President of the British Association with Sir William Ramsay's breadth of view "supposes it will be generally granted that the Commonwealth of Athens attained a high-water mark in literature and thought which has never been surpassed"; when a student of Mr. Edmond Holmes's culture concludes that "since the historic dawn of civilisation in Egypt, India and China, little or no progress other than material has been made" (*The Tragedy of Education*, 1913), how can we accept the cheerfully thoughtless opinion that every age has brought and is still bringing us nearer to perfection?

* * * *

Other philosophies have been suggested. The Roman historian Polybius (204-822 B.C.) believed that the key to all history was the "great idea" of mankind made politically one. The domination of one rule over the entire known world had been experienced under Alexander of Macedon at the end of the brief, brilliant civilisation of Greece. Rome secured for a short while a like domination over a wider surface, and the same "great idea" is found

a century later in the history of Diodorus Siculus :—

> " Throughout the acts of all men, regardless of place or period, there runs a desire to bring all human activities under the control of one state."

This fancy persisted through the ages of Charlemagne, of the Popes who sought universal sovereignty, of the Empire which professed to derive its " rights " from the Papacy, and of Napoleon, spurred on partly by vast ambitions, partly by the enmity of other rulers who saw in him only an " upstart," to attempt the domination of Europe. The same notion of world-empire, though now regarded as maniacal, inflamed even in this age the minds of Prussian professors and generals, and was in large part the cause of the world war.

At first glance, therefore, this key to history looks promising. But it does not, of itself, explain enough. It must be considered as one only of the manifestations of that " will to power " which has caused the whole of man-

kind to suffer throughout the ages upon the compulsion of a few.

Between the petty tyranny of a village head man and the dream of world-wide sovereignty born in the diseased imagination of rulers and statesmen there is no difference in kind. Both are due to that exaggerated self-consciousness which fills lunatic asylums with the victims of what doctors call megalomania.

No animal save Man is afflicted by this pitiful obsession. The other animals fight for food if they are hungry, for the possession of mates and the safety of offspring, for their individual security and well-being. Man alone is moved by the desire for short-lived "greatness," by the ambition to acquire superfluous wealth which he can put to no profitable employment, by the itch to order others about.

Stranger phenomenon still, it is not only those so afflicted whom we see through the ages struggling to satisfy their foolish hunger for prominence. We see, fighting for them, sometimes willingly, sometimes upon compulsion, myriads of men who have no interest

whatever in the attainment of their selfish and usually criminal ends.

* * * *

Contemplating such fantastic self-immolation, all who use their reason must agree with Smollett, who, in the person of Roderick Random,

> " could not help expressing his astonishment at the absurdity of a rational being who thought himself highly honoured in being permitted to encounter abject poverty, oppression, famine, disease, mutilation and evident death, merely to gratify the vicious ambition of a prince by whom his sufferings were disregarded and his name utterly unknown."

Roderick was moved to this outburst by the boasting of a French soldier that " he had had the honour of seeing Louis the Great, and of receiving many wounds in helping to establish his glory."

> " I observed that if his situation were the consequence of compulsion, I would praise

his patience and fortitude; if he had taken up arms in defence of his injured country, he was to be applauded for his patriotism; or if he had fled to this way of life as a refuge from a greater evil, he was justifiable in his own conscience (though I could have no notion of misery more extreme than that he suffered); but to put his condition on the footing of conducing to the glory of his prince was no more than professing himself a desperate slave, who voluntarily underwent the utmost wretchedness and peril, and committed the most flagrant crimes to soothe the barbarous pride of a fellow-creature, his superior in nothing but the power he derived from the submission of such wretches as him."

Loyalty was lauded by kings and their supporters as a notable and necessary virtue for the reason that it served as a drug to deaden, as in the case of this French soldier, and of how many millions of others in every land, the good sense and self-interest of their dupes. When the instruments of royalty could no longer count upon devotion to the persons of

princes, they changed their note and preached "patriotism."

They pretended now that what profited monarchs and Ruling Classes profited the People, as stark a sham as the kindred lying suggestion that "we have now only People's wars."

> "Nowadays princes and governments do not cause wars. The era of Cabinet wars is over. The factors which militate against peace are to be found among the Peoples themselves."—*General v. Moltke in the German Reichstag during the Army Bill debate*, 1890.

No People has ever profited by war. There has never been a community of which the individual members wanted war. They have shouted for it standing together as a crowd, and being intoxicated by eloquence or by cunningly-provoked anger. But what the great mass of men and women have always desired as individuals, and what they desire to-day, is to carry on their occupations without hindrance, to provide for the satisfaction of their needs.

to live in decent comfort with their families, and to enjoy the simpler pleasures, undisturbed by vain ambitions, undesirous of unnecessary wealth.

* * * *

History shows us this desire thwarted continually by those who snatch at power, who are not content with the existence which I have just outlined, who seek to impose their mastery or their beliefs upon masses of their fellows; to draw advantage for themselves, or for the institutions which they represent, by subjecting these masses forcibly to their will.

Attempts have even been made to exhibit history as the glorious creation of tyrants, bigots and tricksters. Carlyle, the victim of a disordered stomach which soured the idealism of his earlier years, changing a generous affection for mankind into cantankerous dislike, declared that

> "the history of what man has accomplished in the world is at bottom the history of the Great Men who have worked here."

This theory he supported, not by argument,

in which Carlyle was never strong, but by imaginative rhetoric, which to-day sounds thin and hollow, while the examples which he chose for the illustration of his theme are seen to be strangely ill-fitted to sustain it.

Of his heroes half were men of letters—Shakespeare, Goethe, Johnson, Rousseau, Burns. Of these only one had any hand in making history, and we know that Rousseau would have been horrified by Robespierre's employment of the methods of the Spanish Inquisition to force upon the French People a distorted version of his philosophy.

Of Carlyle's remaining heroes, Mahomet, Luther and Knox were religious fanatics who helped to bemuse and infuriate mankind, throwing heavy obstacles in the way of natural and rational existence. Napoleon, by Carlyle's own admission, allowed the charlatan element in his character to get the upper hand. Cromwell failed so completely to shape and guide the revolution which placed him in power that he accomplished just nothing at all of any lasting character.

* * * *

Only, I submit, by keeping constantly in view the perpetual struggle between the mass of mankind and a small number greedy for rule or riches, or eager as zealots for some doctrine, some way of life, to constrain as many as possible into agreement with them; only by regarding the events which history chronicles as the ups and downs of man's battle for liberty of development, can we read into it any connected interest, any coherent meaning.

Civilisation has not freed Man from his oppressors. It has only changed their names and their outward seeming. A tribe living under what we call savage conditions is usually subject to the capricious authority of one or a few men; this authority rests upon brute force. If it displeases the tribe it can be by brute force destroyed.

Later the venom of superstition is injected. Then authority secures itself by this buttress, that it has divine sanction, and that to refuse it allegiance is to disobey God.

When that delusion has been painfully eradicated, there arises another. We then see, in

place of brute force, in place of superstition, the tyranny of the vote. Politicians claim for majorities the same "rights" as were formerly exercised by autocracy and priestcraft. Freedom of thought is limited by barriers against the expression of ideas which are held by the leaders of the majority to be inconvenient. Individual liberty of existence is closely circumscribed.

Some have suggested that it is natural to man to be the victim of princes, priests or politicians. "He will always," they say, "be in subjection to some self-constituted despotism. He invites tyranny to set its foot upon his neck. He is so easily duped, so readily exchanges one form of exploitation for another, so angrily protests when the chicane and self-interest of his oppressors are pointed out, so innocently makes himself the victim of blatant advertising or unblushing jobbery, that it is useless to hope his state of enthralment can ever be ended."

"The truth is men are very much like sheep: gregarious by nature, willing to follow any leader, to obey anyone bold enough to assume the command; their consent is never asked;

they are ordered and obey. Force has always been king. Mights have been rights."

That passage from George Henry Lewes's "Life of Robespierre" expresses what many have felt. Yet all through history we see that King Force has been steadily and frequently overthrown. We see that the fight against might being right has never died down.

All through history man has striven against exploitation in every one of its forms. Like Proteus, it has changed its appearance many times, but has been fought with in all its disguises. In time each succesive form of dupery has been exposed and overcome. This seems to me to prove that man is by nature a free being and that he will always struggle to develop unhindered.

How else, I ask, can we explain his unceasing conflict with oppression, save by admitting his instinct for liberty, his unfailing reaction against efforts to numb this, and to use his labour and strength for ends which do not profit him, to keep him tied and bound with the rope whose strands are Force, and Fraud, and Fear?

CHAPTER X.

THE STRUGGLE TOWARDS THE LIGHT.

> The great principle, that societies and laws exist only for the purpose of increasing the sum of private happiness.—*Macaulay, Essay on Machiavelli.*

Never has the battle been easy. Many have been the repulses suffered. The corrupting influence of Power, the cruel selfishness of Greed, the impositions of religious system, the vain imaginings of those who seek both the explanation and the chief good of Humanity in supernatural spheres—these and other evils are both subtle and strong.

No sooner has Man freed himself from one set of chains than the forging of another set has begun. It seems sometimes as if the elements in Man's nature—of imposture and tyranny on the one side, of credulity and patience on the other—were fated to defeat

every effort to make life more natural and rational.

Something of this despondency was felt by Matthew Arnold when he wrote the stanzas, stirring in their wistful beauty nevertheless, which he called "Revolution":—

"Before Man parted for this earthly strand,
While yet upon the verge of heaven he stood,
God put a heap of letters in his hand,
And bade him make with them what word he could.

"And Man has turned them many times; made Greece,
Rome, England, France; yes, nor in vain essayed
Way after way, changes that never cease.
The letters have combined, something was made.

"But ah! an inextinguishable sense
Haunts him that he has not made what he should;
That he has still, though old, to recommence,

Since he has not yet found the word God would.

* * * *

"One day, thou sayest, there will at last appear
The word, the order, which God meant should be.
Ah! we shall know that well when it comes near;
The band will quit Man's heart, he will breathe free."

Whether "the word" can ever be put together, we know not. But, whatever excuse there may be for doubting whether man's self-consciousness, the one faculty which distinguishes him from other animals, is compatible with contentment, it is both foolish and dangerous to make this a reason for opposing all change.

* * * *

If a traveller obliged to bear a heavy load were told, "It is useless for you to shift your burden from one shoulder to the other; that makes it no lighter," he would reply that, if he did not frequently alter the incidence of its weight, he would sink beneath it.

"True," he would say, "shifting it makes the burden no lighten, nor does it shorten the journey, but it brings me partial, temporary ease." Were it not for shiftings of the burden, that is to say, for revolutions, for changes in beliefs and systems, for fresh beginnings and the casting off of ancient weariness, Man would have no ease at all.

There is, therefore, no cause for discouragement in history's record of faith misplaced, of hopes unfulfilled. That faith, those hopes, were needful to sorely burdened mankind. Even exaggerated expectancies may be good if they help us over difficult places in our road.

As we climb mountains, we are often mistaken when we say, "There is the top; when we reach there, we shall be above the world." We arrive, and see beyond still other summits far above us. Again, and again maybe, we deceive ourselves. But such deceptions help us to persevere. They shift the load.

* * * *

Many, when they hear the word Revolution, shudder. It means change, and most of us

hate changes. It suggests to their minds the confused noise of civil tumult and garments rolled in blood. They think inevitably of the French Revolution, of street fighting in small, blood-thirsty South American States, of battle, murder and sudden death.

That is to mistake local incidents for general tendencies, to suppose that revolution means no more than the upsetting of a system, the deposition of a King.

Here or there fighting and bloodshed are sure to be caused by any new idea spread over a wide surface. "No change of a vast kind can be other than a stone of stumbling to those many persons for whom the beaten ways of life alone are tolerable, and who, when these ways are broken, are bewildered and lost." What Froude wrote of England at the Reformation period is true of all peoples at all times. Those who resist the stream of tendency provoke reprisals.

This should be pondered. "If a great change is to be made in human affairs," wrote Burke, "the minds of men will be fitted to it,

the general opinions and feelings will draw that way. Every fear, every hope will forward it; and then they who persist in opposing this mighty current in human affairs will appear rather to resist the decrees of Providence than the mere designs of men. They will not be resolute and firm, but perverse and obstinate."

It is from the exaggerated value put upon inveterate custom that those disturbances result which in many minds represent by themselves the meaning of Revolution. They are, in truth, no more than small parts of the really great revolutions, incidental to attempts at forming "the word, the order, which God meant should be," to the changes in belief and practice which occur from time to time, and, by bringing "partial, temporary ease," enable Mankind to stagger on.

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If they are examined closely and sincerely, all these great revolutions are discerned to have had the same object in view, that object being to increase liberty of thought and action, to obtain for the mass of mankind more elbow room, to make human life more natural and

rational. For a time, in certain departments, or for certain people, they have most of them succeeded. Forward goes Mankind with renewed energy. One shoulder is freed from the weight which galled and bore it down; the other shoulder scarcely feels the load.

Unhappily there begins at once, although for some while it may not be noticed, the operation of the forces which are opposed to human life being either natural or rational.

Pride, ignorance, superstition; the craft of rulers; the charlatanry of seekers after riches, the cunning of priests; all the elements of Mankind which aim at personal profit or the advantage of an institution rather than at the general good, come into play and form a damnable alliance. Little by little they get Mankind into their grip afresh. At last the burden becomes once more intolerable. It must be shifted again.

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One fundamental change was marked by the beginning of the Christian Era. The teaching of Christ brought together in an exquisitely

beautiful and moving form the dreams and longings of an age which found it impossible to believe any more in gods and goddesses who were not even dignified or respectable, and yearned for a warmer creed than that which doomed the dead in subterranean chilly exile to dreary lamentation over their lost places in the sun. Allowing for Eastern hyperbole, no more excellent rule of life than Christ's has ever been framed.

This perhaps explains what would, without such explanation, be both startling and unintelligible; I mean the rapidity of the process which converted teaching aimed at making life more natural and rational into a system as unnatural and irrational as the world has ever known.

The forces which I have enumerated felt themselves threatened by a dangerous enemy. The Christianity of Christ, though enshrined and practised throughout the ages, and still to-day, by a few to whom its beauty made appeal, was transformed for the mass into Pauline dogma, an unsatisfying blend of commonplace morality

and Byzantine metaphysic, a useful foundation upon which to erect a hard-and-fast theological and theocratic system akin in every particular to that which Christ tried vainly to destroy.

When the final stages of the gradual revolution which broke up the Roman Empire were reached, Christianity had in it enough of power and beauty to charm the barbarian imagination and had not yet been quite petrified into a system without a soul.

The Barbarians represented the forces of reality and sincerity against so much that was artificial and meaningless in the Roman system. They were simple, elemental. They completed what the founding of Christianity had begun, the sweeping away of a civilisation that had outlived its usefulness.

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From that time until the sixteenth century the Church held sway. During some twelve hundred years its system grew in power. It held the Western world in fee, doing good as well as evil, for men are always better than the doctrines they profess. The arts of archi-

tecture, painting and music developed under its encouragement. Characters of rare nobility, lives of shining devotion, lovely and kindly impulses gleamed bright at all times among the dark and hateful activities of a corrupt, persecuting, power-seeking, material Church, in league with all the other forces which fight against simplicity and freedom.

All efforts to induce reform from within were vain. As well expect a rotten apple to become sound. The sixteenth century found the longing for truth and reality very strong. The system which had scarce been challenged in a thousand years began to crumble and decay.

The Reformation was only one result of a change in men's minds which was destined to affect every department of human life. All falsehood had become wearisome and intolerable. All authority claiming to exist of its own inherent right was henceforward to be questioned.

In the next century we English cut off the head of one King and chased another out. In the century after that the French grubbed up their system by the roots. All the nations

which are still vigorously alive felt and acted upon the impulse towards sincerity, towards justice, towards the genuine and away from the conventional, the sham.

Wherever the anti-natural, anti-rational forces resisted attack, decay was enthroned. Wherever they were, even for the moment, conquered, there was a rush of healthy new growth.

Reaction, however, followed swiftly. The French were not yet of a sufficiently tough fibre to spell out their new word. The insanity of "la gloire" was in their blood. Napoleon supervened. The Ruling Classes stood together. Gradually the old system, or something like it, was everywhere restored. The excesses of the friends of freedom drove many back to the older modes of thought. Everywhere men grew weary with struggling. It was only by slow degrees that popular government got itself established, and even then there clung to it far too much of the cobwebby rubbish of monarchical days.

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And at this period, as I have described on

an earlier page, occurred a development which checked the steady advance towards more natural, more rational existence. This was the rise of the Factory, the sudden disorderly growth of cities, the emergence of the Plutocrat, the creation of a wage-earning class.

Lecky, a historian of calm, almost frigid judgment, tells us that with the coming of Industrialism "the war between capital and labour began. Wealth was immensely increased, but the inequalities of its distribution were aggravated The contrast between extravagant luxury and abject misery became much more frequent and much more glaring than before. The wealthy employer ceased to live among his people; the quarters of the rich and the poor became more distant, and every great city soon presented those sharp divisions of classes and districts in which the political observer discovers one of the most dangerous symptoms of revolution."

Politicians are seldom political observers. Dealing chiefly with the superficial and the commonplace, their minds, even if acute above the average, which is unusual, become subdued

to what they work in. The Ruling Class was intent upon little beyond winning party victories, maintaining its interests and privileges, avoiding change. Even Mr. Charles Whibley, the last of the High Tories, who dreads democracy as Canadian lumbermen dread a forest fire, who would use the Ruling Class, if he could, as a bulwark against popular rule, feels compelled to write of that class thus:

> "We have been governed of late by men who thought the means of politics far greater than the end, and who played the game with a feverish eagerness and in complete indifference to the welfare of the country. . . . They effectually deceived the people. Their words were pompous, their manners grave. . . . But all the while they devoted long and laborious days to the business of intrigue. . . . It was the duty of each one, so they thought, to get as high an office as he could, to get it as quickly as possible, and to hold it against all comers."

So, hating the new Franchise Bill, Mr. Whibley is nevertheless constrained to admit that it will effect one beneficial change. "It

will at least rid us of the Old Gangs, who, with the aid of party funds and with a complete devotion to parliamentary intrigue, brought us to the pass in which we stood at the outbreak of the war."

* * * *

The Ruling Class, being thus occupied, did not discover the "dangerous symptoms of revolution." It has not discovered them yet. It had warnings, even from its own members, but these fell on stopped-up ears.

Lord Randolph Churchill was one of those who tried to unstop them. He was not either by character, by culture, or by intellect, a front rank man. The low standard of brains ruling among politicians can be no better illustrated than by the rapid rise to a leading position of this clever young man, possessing ability such as great numbers of young men in all classes could have matched; or, to take a later example, by the extravagant praise bestowed upon such a Minister as Lord Haldane.

That Lord Haldane as War Minister permitted military business to be set in order, especially

the business of shipping an expeditionary force to France and expanding the Army which existed, is most true. But is it a proof of shining merit to act upon the best professional advice? Evidently . . . among War Ministers. Among them Lord Haldane shone.

That Lord Randolph Churchill had vigour and some insight is not to be denied. The speed with which he advanced himself was due mainly to the absence of these qualities in his competitors, and to the influence of his position as a Duke's son with a family seat in Parliament; but it must be set to his credit that he proved himself an accurate reader of some of the signs of his times.

"The working classes," he said in 1883, "are quite determined to govern themselves, and will not be either driven or hoodwinked by any class or class interests."

Again, in 1885, when he repeated his view and a friend urged that "the working classes must have leaders," Lord Randolph answered: "Yes, but they will not want aristocrats."

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The Ruling Class did not believe this. It fancied itself indispensable. It supposed that by changing its tone a little, by making a few "concessions," by scrambling a few places and honours among the "Labour men," it could keep its knee upon the nation's chest.

It suffered from the same delusion as that which afflicted the Emperor Napoleon the Third, who believed he could maintain his hold upon the masses in France by shaking hands with "working men" in blouses, these men being, in fact, agents of the police dressed for the part.

The British nation, it is true, obligingly accepted this position for a time, and seemed to like it. But that time is past. The nation's respect for the "titled, landed, and official classes" has turned to anger. Their incompetence, their offensive assumption of superiority, their preferring of party to principle, their blindness to what was afoot both at home and abroad, have sapped the belief in them completely.

"Each age is a dream that is dying,
Or one that is coming to birth,"

sang Arthur O'Shaughnessy in his "Music-makers'" ode. And often the dead dreams seem like nightmares, while those new-born have about them the radiance of eternal hope.

Once more we have reached the point of Revolution. Once more Authority is called to account. Its acts are to be judged, not by the standard which itself set up, in order that its failures might be lightly regarded, but by standards of reality and usefulness. We have dwelt in a fog of pretence and deception long enough. There is no more any belief that the Old Gangs aim at Joseph Chamberlain's ideal of good government: "to secure to every man his natural rights, his right to existence and a fair enjoyment of it." There is a very strong suspicion that they are opposed to the attainment of such an aim.

Their solemn frivolity, their agreement to keep blinkers over the eyes of the People, their ingrained insincerity alike in word and action, have created universal distrust.

We echo Wordsworth's cry:—

"Earth is sick
And Heaven is weary of the hollow words
That States and Kingdoms utter when they talk
Of Truth and Justice."

Those lines were written more than a century ago. We have been made more sick and more weary by another hundred years of chicanery and exploitation. "Enough of lying," we cry; "let us strip away humbug and see things as they are."

CHAPTER XI.

TOO MUCH GOVERNMENT.

> More crimes and blunders have been committed within these four walls (the walls of the Cabinet Room at 10 Downing Street) than in any other place in this island.—*John Bright to John Morley.*

We have seen that the great revolutions in the thought of mankind affect all men who have reached pretty much the same stage of civilisation, but that they affect different bodies of men in different ways. That revolution which has been preparing for so long a time and is now upon us will not react upon all countries alike, though it will have features common to all.

Everywhere there will be attempts to substitute for Industrialism on a capitalist basis—that is to say, for the system of production which allots to those who own the capital, means

of production, buildings, machinery and to those who undertake the management the largest possible profit, and to the workers the smallest possible; which exacts from the workers long hours of what is for the most part mechanical drudgery, and puts the relation between employer and employed upon a wage-slavery basis —everywhere there will be attempts to substitute for this soulless and deforming institution some more natural, more rational plan.

Co-operation will be tried, State ownership will be tried. The theory of Syndicalism which postulates the local owning and managing of local means of production by the workers or their nominees, and Guild Socialism, an interesting variant of the same principle, are sure to be put to the test.

For, everywhere, there is the same disgust with the results of unchecked competition, everywhere there is a readiness to experiment with systems more agreeable with that brotherhood of all men in which we profess to believe.

Everywhere, too, there is coming, I believe,

a reaction against the over-elaboration of the machinery of government.

What has happened is what happens to an erection of playing-cards or of wine-glasses when it is piled too high. Its own weight brings it down. The field and functions of government have been enlarged so widely and rapidly as to impose a strain too severe.

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Mr. Balfour spoke in the House of Commons (July 18, 1917) of "the vast complicated machinery of permanent officials by which alone you can carry on the colossal business of government."

Of government in the most recent sense, yes.

But all who have had to do with machinery know that, as it becomes more complicated and vaster, it needs highly skilled attention and must be very carefully adjusted to its purposes. The Party System has prevented the machinery of government in the British Empire from being either designed with foresight or regulated with precision. Parties hurriedly botch up contriv-

ances for vote-catching, caring not how flimsy and impermanent they may be. They pile storey after storey on to the card-house, heedless of the certainty that it must collapse.

The desire for more and more government, like the desire for more and more medicine, is a symptom of disease. The cry for the State to do everything assumes that individuals are incapable of managing their own concerns, educating their children, making provision for sickness and senility, and so on.

It is true that bare subsistence wages have reduced the independence of the proletariat by making it impossible for the mass to do more with their scanty earnings than exist uncomfortably. It has been necessary on this account to regulate by law many matters which under a system more just and humane would not have called for legislative interference. Save for this, the notion that Members of Parliament and officials can order the life of a nation better than the individuals who compose the nation could never have taken hold.

However, this assumption of the People's

dependence upon "the State" suited politicians in democratic countries no less than it suited despotic rulers.

Sir Donald Wallace, in his "Russia," describes with admirably acute terseness the attitude of the Tsardom and the official caste in that country:—

> "It treated the people as minors incapable of understanding its political designs and only very partially competent to look after their own local affairs. . . .
>
> "The officials systematically treated those over whom they were placed as a conquered or inferior race. The State thus came to be regarded as an abstract entity with interests entirely different from those of the human beings composing it."

That is an attitude not differing in essence from the attitude of most governing persons in "free" countries.

Lord Chatham, in the eighteenth century, "considered mobs in the light of raw material which might be manufactured to a proper stuff

for their own happiness in the end." The view is not extinct to-day.

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There exists a deplorable, because dangerous, confusion of mind regarding government, regarding the relation between the People and "the State." This results in large part, I think, from failure to grasp in full the difference between monarchical and popular systems of government.

Monarchs found their claim to sovereignty upon Divine Right. They consider their dominions as God's gift or trust to them. Therefore they say, as Louis the Fourteenth said, "I am the State," "L'Etat, c'est moi." Therefore they regard any diminution of their dominions as a personal loss. They resist by all means possible the desire of any part for separation. They are eager to extend their "properties."

Popular government must be based upon the consent of the governed. Such a strife as the American Civil War was not democratic, but monarchical, in character. The object of

the Northern States was to force by arms the Southern States to remain united with them, a monarchical motive, if ever there was one. Yet this is not generally perceived.

Take another illustration. It would be no loss to the British People if India should cease to be a part of the British Empire, though it might be disastrous to the Indian Peoples, which would probably start fighting among themselves. Those who speak as if India would be a loss to the British People do not appreciate the consequences of Britain having ceased to be a monarchical State and having become a Republic with a hereditary President or figurehead.

When a monarch speaks of the "interest of the State," his meaning is plain. He means my interest. When the phrase is used in a country popularly governed, unless it means the interest of the People, it means nothing at all.

Those who assert the right to choose their own form of government must necessarily con-

cede this right to others, or else adopt the principle :—

"That those shall take who have the power,
And those shall keep who can."

The confusion of mind in this direction is lamentably illustrated by the case of Ireland. The South of Ireland, desiring Home Rule, ought by the theory and practice of popular government, to have Home Rule. Only the Party System and the predominance of a Ruling Caste prevented this from being agreed to many years ago.

But the necessary corollary to Home Rule for the South of Ireland is that the North of Ireland shall be free to say : "We do not want Home Rule; we want some other form of government."

For the South of Ireland to oppose the North separating itself for purposes of government is as illogical as was the opposition of the English electorate to Home Rule in the South. Behind each illogicality lurked the monarchical argument : "You must not take away what

belongs to ME. I will not have MY property divided up, my influence weakened, my taxes diminished.''

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The only theory of '' the State '' which can be reasonably applied to countries where the Peoples rule, or could rule if they chose, is that People and State are identical.

It is idle to argue that anything which injures the People benefits the State. In the wars of the eighteenth century vast numbers of Englishmen lost their lives abroad, and the burden laid upon Englishmen at home was enormous. That war which was concerned at the outset with the Spanish claim of a right to search British ships cost sixty millions and benefited the People not at all. The next war cost ninety millions and was equally barren of result so far as the People were concerned.

Lord Chatham was said to have raised the British State to an unprecedented height of greatness. Most historians repeat this shallow and false view. The result to the People was a debt of £150,000,000, greatly increased

taxation, general poverty and distress. The monarch and the Ruling Class kept up their prestige and influence at the People's very heavy cost.

The scramble for Africa in which all the Greater Powers of Europe engaged during the later years of the nineteenth century, could be justified by none but the monarchical argument. The interests of Peoples were not considered. If they had been, it could never have been a possibility that France and England should fight over a small area of malarial swamp.

Nor have the People's interests, as yet, ever been made the chief consideration in any country. The monarchical idea of the State has persisted in the slowly moving minds of the preposterous persons who have held high office, even in popular governments.

* * * *

Russia has already broken with the evil tradition of despotic and diplomatic intrigue. Other Peoples will follow. People's Rule will admit no distinction between the interests of a com-

munity and the interests of the men and women who are members of it.

It was a distinction invented by Ruling Classes, who gained by it, since they considered themselves to be the State as much as the King had once claimed to be. It has been the cause of incalculable suffering; it has filled the world with misery and dread. Now the fraud of it has begun to be discovered.

The Stuart Kings could count upon the response to appeals for "patriotic" support from the English nation in wars undertaken by them for purely private and personal reasons, such as the war against Spain in revenge for the refusal of the hand of a Spanish Princess to the Prince of Wales. Yet even the German Emperor was sane enough to know that he must call upon the German nation to fight, not for him and his, as they really did fight, but "in defence of their own interests," which were not threatened.

Everywhere the hollowness of politicians' appeals to patriotism is being discerned with equal clearness. We cannot now be deceived

so easily by statesmen like Thiers, who, while pretending to desire peace, was always crying out that France was being humiliated and wronged; or like Asquith, who, within a few weeks, during the spring of 1915, made an "eloquent" speech declaring that the future Europe must be based, not upon "the balance of power," that deceptive and discredited make-believe, but upon "a partnership of nations," and then made a treaty grounded upon nothing else but that same "balance of power" which he had affected to despise.

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No doubt in each of these, as in all cases where politicians spoke with two voices, "reasons of State" would be alleged. Which is just as if the directors of a company should deceive the shareholders, and then plead that they considered the interests of the company more important than the interests of the people who owned the shares. In such an event the directors (especially if they were discovered to have gained personal profit) would soon find themselves in gaol. We may come in time to sending some of our fraudulent politicians and officials there.

For it has also begun to be understood that the more "the State" is exalted in the internal sphere of politics, the more will the plague of Officialdom be increased. I suspect that the cause of the decadence of nations, which has been so variously placed, lies more in that increase of Officialdom than in any other circumstance whatever.

The decadence of nations is not connected, it seems to me, with any change in the character of the mass of the People, except so far as their character is changed by governmental weakness or folly. What is called the decadence of nations is really the decadence of governments.

Trying to do too much and, as a consequence, doing too little, doing the wrong things and neglecting those which should be their first concern, they sink, by reason of their own excessive complication and weight, into lethargy and impotence and decay.

Only those Peoples can be free and prosperous which are suspicious of governmental activities, which resist the tendency of officials

to form themselves into a caste, to multiply forms and restrictions, and to behave as if their position were privileged above ordinary citizenship.

Only those communities will safeguard their contentment which refuse to allow the squabbles of statesmen, the maniac ambitions of self-seeking adventurers, or leaders drunk with power to cloud their true interests and embroil them in troubles. "It is always the people who pay when there is fighting for power," cried a poor woman in Moscow during Russia's agony. There sounded the voice of truth which shall guide mankind to a wiser, happier state.

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It may be that for a period there will be even a worse plague of Officialdom. Arnold Bennett is troubled by this fear. The plague, then, must either pass or destroy us. "The less government the better," will, I believe, be the cry of enlightened democracy.

We have been learning for a long time, and the monstrous growth of Officialdom during the war bore it painfully in upon us, that authority,

unless it be jealously bestowed, and hedged about with strict limitations, is a curse and a disaster to mankind.

There are very few who can safely be trusted to exercise authority with good sense and good feeling, whether the authority be that of parent, schoolmaster, official or despotic ruler. "All persons possessing any power," Burke wrote, "ought to be strongly and awe-fully impressed with an idea that they act in trust." Shelley hit upon the same universal and elemental truth in the lines:—

"Power, like a devastating pestilence,
Pollutes whate'er it touches."

Shakespeare had already put the case from a satirical and less furiously indignant angle:—

"Man, poor Man,
Dressed in a little brief authority,
Plays such fantastic tricks before high Heaven
As make the angels weep."

Set against these condemnations, the saying of Metternich that his chief aim was "to strengthen authority," flashes a vivid light

upon the clash of interests between the People and those who deem themselves born to rule.

As a means of abolishing this clash of interests, we must make an end of the pomp and circumstance which are harmful legacies from the old days of monarchical government.

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The men who serve the community as executives and administrators, ought to do so from a sense of public duty, not from ambition, from greed of power or gain.

Possibly that is too much to expect. If so, the People must check any tendency to ostentation in those whom they elect to carry on the business of government. This must not be a business attractive to carry on by reason of its raising men above their fellows, putting them into a position of patronage, providing them with incomes larger than they could earn in any other walk of life.

Indeed, the occupation of managing public affairs should, ideally, be made unattractive. It might be advisable to hang every Minister

upon the termination of his term of office. All, certainly, who have been guilty of gross mismanagement or flagrant lack of foresight should be punished. Responsibility must be brought home to individuals if good government be desired.

The English People have allowed bureaucrats and politicians to build up a system which so cunningly prevents anyone from being found individually responsible for anything that observers have fancied we did not care whether we were well governed or not. The chief aim of officials is to avoid taking decisions. This pusillanimity poisons public life. To it we owe the habit of government by committee, which results in marrowless compromises, poor-spirited delays, all the inconveniences and disasters of nerveless indecision.

To make up their minds and to act is an agony for men of weak fibre. Such men have lately composed our governing class. They have been persuasive talkers, but most unsatisfactory doers. What Cardinal Bourne has called "the domination of a capitalistic and oligarchic régime," led to so pitiful a parody

of government that the cry for change has, from being sectional, become general, and change is bound to come.

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An American writer, Mr. Irving Bacheller, has suggested that "all the troubles of this world have come of inherited superiority." If he had said "artificial superiority," he would have been right. We see, however, a great deal of "artificial superiority" which is not inherited, but impudently asserted by "new men." There is more of it in some Republics than can be found under some monarchies.

When I paid a visit to the late President of the Portuguese Republic, I could not but remark the royal state which this pleasant old gentleman kept up, or which was kept up for him. He lived in a palace. There were the usual ante-rooms to be passed through. The upholstery was of the usual palace kind. There was a politely ceremonious private secretary to receive and usher me in. There were flunkeys.

A few months later I was invited to the

house of Sir Robert Borden, Prime Minister of Canada. The contrast filled me with contentment.

A charming, simple home, not different from that which Sir Robert occupied before he became prominent in politics. No pretentiousness, no flummery, no assumption of "superiority." That is how the leaders of democracies should live. A Minister of State, the President of a Republic, even a hereditary President, should go to his office like any other man, and, when his work is done, return to his home and become a private individual.

The palace tradition must be dropped. Court dress and decorations, ministerial receptions and dinner parties, all the trappings and the suites of Officialdom, are unnecessary; more than that, they are harmful. We suffer in this as in so many other ways, from the burdens of a past which we have outgrown.

These trimmings of the business of government often attract the wrong men into it. They grow accustomed to the illusion of power and

superiority. They cling to office without shame, and without regard for the nation's interest.

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The only men fit to exercise power in public life are those who are ready at any moment to give it up; who would prefer to give it up and become private citizens. Sir Robert Borden represents this, the highest type of governing man. I have known but two others who shared with him that honour.

Those two were General Louis Botha and Dr. Jameson. Each of them remained in public life during the early days of Union Government in South Africa because he honestly felt that a duty was laid upon him. Each would have chosen, as Sir Robert Borden would choose, if their choice had been free, to return to private life. They stayed, as Sir Robert Borden stays, because their country needed them.

When I hear it tritely said that democracy necessarily produces demagogy, that the rule of the People is bound to result in a lowering of the standards of public life, I think of these men who were the Ministers, which means the

servants, of democracies far more advanced than ours in England, and who showed themselves to be men of higher character, as well as higher capacity, than any who have held office among us under our "capitalistic and oligarchic régime."

CHAPTER XII.

THE NEW FORMULA.

> However much we may smile at those who venture to-day to put the dictates of morality and humanity above eating and drinking, riches and prosperity: who can be happy only in an atmosphere in which not force, but justice, rules: who wish for an ordering of the world not in violent opposition to their religious professions: who interpret peace on earth as a peace of the conscience and the soul: yet these are, after all, the ultimate aims for which we must all strive and without which this life would not be worth living.—*Dr. Dernburg, formerly German Colonial Secretary.*

The practical modes by which the Revolution will express itself cannot be exactly foretold. Nor need they greatly concern us. They are not the really important matter which we are considering.

The really important matter is the shifting

of the burden, the turning of the letters in Man's hand in a fresh endeavour to find

> "The word, the order, which God meant should be."

That is the aspect of Revolutions which has permanent interest, the only aspect in which they are capable of endowing the world with any gift of enduring value.

It is not the bricks and mortar of Revolutions which lend them their permanent interest, it is their influence upon the mind of Humanity. We do not think of the establishment of the Church, of the rules of conduct of the Early Saints, of the Decrees of General Councils, as the essential matters in the Revolution begun so nobly by Christ and spoiled so pitifully by St. Paul. We think of the Woman taken in Adultery, the "Whatsoever ye have done unto the least of these my little ones," the Sermon on the Mount.

What will make this age of ours glow in history and thrill the ages to come? Not that we passed this or that law, abolished this or

that privilege; but that we are seeking a new formula of civilisation.

* * * *

The formula based upon the account of God's nature and the world's creation given in Jewish literature, which was adopted by the early Christians in despite of Christ, and which was in undisputed possession for the best part of twelve hundred years, has lost its hold upon us.

We no longer believe that God is a Being of like passions with ourselves, but less just and reasonable than we are; or that He created Man to be Lord of Creation; or that the sun, moon, and stars were set in the sky for man's convenience.

Copernicus and Galileo began to demolish the old formula centuries ago. The geologists with their hammers struck it some irreparable blows. Lamarck and Darwin and Wallace, with their discoveries in evolution, forced those who clung to it to admit that it was true for them only in a figurative sense.

In the beginning, interpreted with humble

goodwill, the formula proved capable of having erected upon it a civilisation of some value. As it hardened, as it was more closely systematised, the life went out of it.

So long as men believed in a Personal God, the Maker and Director of the Universe, some strove for love of Him to be just and merciful in their dealings; others were constrained by fear of Him to keep a check upon their base inclinations.

When the belief in this Personal God weakened, and from most minds died away, and when moreover the political economists, unchallenged by the Churches, taught the abominable doctrine that it was right for the strong to get all they could for themselves, and that interference in behalf of the weak was "unscientific," then the only basis left for civilisation to rest upon was a basis of falsehood and cruelty. Civilisation began at once to topple over.

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What has been the thought at the back of the mind of the "highly civilised" concerning

what the Scottish catechism calls "the chief end of man?"

The thought has been that the really important matter is to be well off and well considered, to increase riches, to elaborate luxury, to secure all the comfort and enjoyment possible, to have a good time.

The more "civilised" a class or an individual became, the more firmly one found this doctrine held and followed. The mass of people never consciously adopted it; they had no leisure for thought. But it affected them.

The huge cities that have spread their monstrous, gangrenous growth since the rise of the Factory, attracted and injured the country bred folk. Here were set up among the Many the same measure and the same ideal of civilisation as were current among the Few who believed that they alone were truly civilised.

So the poison worked downwards, but not deeply into the souls of the mass, only into the less vital parts of their organism. So long as

the energy of men and women is fully occupied in procuring the simpler needs of life, they are proof against much that harms those who have leisure. It was the shielded Comfortable Class, from which was drawn the Ruling Class, which suffered the most, because it profited the most, from the degeneration of the Christian formula and the consequent decay of the civilisation founded upon it.

This degeneration, this decay, have forced men to examine afresh into the problem of their relations to one another and to the Universe. We have been trying to find out what we can believe, and out of this inquisition a new formula is being evolved.

That is the root of the matter. The details of the practical measures to which the new formula of civilisation will give rise are of secondary importance. They will work themselves out, in some respect clumsily, in some too hastily, but on the whole, as I believe, sharing as I do Charles Dickens's "faith in the people governed," not in the main harshly or with vindictive injustice.

There might be excuse for vindictiveness, for that " kind of wild justice " which we call Revenge.

When we reflect on what the mass, now becoming conscious of its power, has endured in discomfort and suffering, in contumely and privation; when we walk the mean, dark, noisome streets where they have lived, whole families often in one or two rooms; when we think of their heart-sick and foot-sore searches for employment, their pitiful entreaties to be allowed to win bread for wives and children, the insolence and cruelty which they have suffered because they dared not show resentment; when all this, and more, make indignation burn hot within us, we are inclined to say: "' Now let those who have always been the Comfortable learn what being the Underdog means."

But that is a bad thought. Revenge harms those who indulge it far more than those upon whom it is wreaked. The latter may for a while bear scars upon their bodies. The former have for ever scarred souls.

There is in the British nature a sweetness of blood, an essentially decent and honourable strain, which makes me sure that a square deal all round will be the object of the Revolution.

Just as after years of war the desire "to win" was replaced by the desire for a Peace which should be fair to all Peoples, which should start the world off again upon a basis of finer sincerity and friendlier feeling, so the thought of class warfare is fading before the brighter ideal of a social system which shall give everyone his or her chance, which shall neither favour nor oppress any.

* * * *

If Class warfare is still spoken of and recommended, as it is by Lenin in Russia, this is due chiefly to the opposition offered by the *bourgeoisie*, the Exploiting and Ruling Classes, to any re-laying of the social foundations.

These classes argue that, if they did not oppose change, they would be like geese which should run to the goose-girl when she cried, "Dilly dilly, come and be killed."

'Twould be wiser if they would read history,

perceive that change must come, and make the best of what may be a bad job for "moneyed worldlings," but will be a good job for millions who have hitherto consented to be downtrodden for the advantage of the well-to-do.

Many among the *bourgeoisie* are resolved to do this, and here again we touch the heart of the Revolution. What we have seen coming for many a year, what we shall soon see in operation, is, as I have already insisted, far from being merely a change of system; it is a change of heart. That is what makes it interesting and valuable.

What we call "the Revolution in England," the contemptuous dismissal of James the Second in 1688, deserved neither of those epithets. It was a domestic episode, a political necessity. So was our short experience of Commonwealth government. Even our Reformation had been little more, so far as it went in Henry the Eighth's time.

A passionate longing for more truth, more freedom, for more "elbow room" and less

unnatural, artificial constraint, that was the cause of the Reformation in Germany. It was felt at that time in England only by a few eager spirits.

The nation saw these few pursued into the closets where they gathered to read the Bible, saw them threatened and tormented by the Pharisees and the Scribes, saw them thrown into prison and burned at the stake, with an indifference hardly to be distinguished from approval.

The nation did not take kindly to the new faith, and when Mary came to the throne restored the Mass, as John Richard Green says, "with a burst of enthusiasm," and permitted the burnings to begin again. Slowly, slowly, the leaven worked. The whole lump was not leavened until many years had passed. Behind the English Reformation there was no great principle in the minds either of the King and his councillors or of the People at large.

* * * *

But now behind the World Revolution there is a great principle. This principle is taking

possession of the nation's mind. During many generations it has struggled for mastery over the active force of selfishness in the class which owns, exploits and governs, over the passive force of custom among all who worship the God of Things as they Are. It is the principle which Christ taught: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them."

It is the principle of sincerity and freedom, of justice, and brotherly love, the same principle as that which has, though often clouded by weakness and self-seeking and resentment, produced all the great revolutions and reformations aimed at relieving the pressure of the burden upon the shoulders of mankind.

The Principle is laughed at to-day, as the enemies of the People always have laughed at it. They call it "unpractical," they denounce it as "dangerous." Force and guile are declared to be the only influences which have weight in human affairs.

But the world, sickened with the reek of bloodshed, listens for some work of hope and turns away from the Denying Spirit.

"Believe in the good and it shall come unto thee; have faith in the Unseen, and the seen shall become unto thee as a testament from invisible beauty.

"There is strength in righteousness and ecstasy in the power of good; the hater of evil endueth a nation with power divine.

"The age of faith is before us, the morning of sincerity is dawning upon the deluded, and the day of deliverance is at hand." *

* * * *

Every civilisation has endured for a season, then been swept away to make room for a new one. What we are watching now is the death of the civilisation based upon belief in the all-importance of material wealth, upon the theory that the heart of man is evil and that the struggle, not for life, but for riches and luxury and power, is a necessary condition of his existence.

Struggle for life is the law of Nature, but the scramble for superfluity is unnatural and

* From "Psalms of the West," by the Hon. Rollo Russell, 7th Edition, Longmans, 1/-.

therefore unhealthy. The unhealthiness and unhappiness of social conditions resulting from the old, selfish, material formula was lamented by poets and prophets all through the nineteenth century. Keats bade the nightingale—

"Fade far away, dissolve and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever and the fret
Here where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last grey hairs
Where youth grows pale, and spectre thin, and dies
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden eyed despairs."

Matthew Arnold saw himself and his fellowmen as—

"Light half-believers of our casual creeds,
Who never deeply felt or clearly willed,
Whose insight never has borne fruit in deeds,
Whose vague resolves never have been fulfilled."

Life was "a long unhappy dream and "close-lipp'd patience" was Man's only friend—

"Sad patience, too near neighbour to despair."

And all the seers and singers who pierced to the cause of the Age's dis-ease and unhappiness (one sign of this unhappiness being the feverish hunt after distraction and pleasure) have hoped for the change of heart which alone could bring health and contentment back.

Whatever violent, rash words may be spoken, whatever crimes or blunders committed in its name; however the hot, unruly passions of men may obscure the message which, if God be what we think Him, must certainly be of God; however confused and fumbled may be the working out in detail of Reconstruction schemes, let us never forget the principle behind it all: let us cling to the thought that all gropings towards a better state are the outcome of that change of heart which really is the Revolution.

Let us not lose sight of the wood for the trees.

* * * *

Some may say, "The trees will soon prove to have been of sporadic and short-lived growth." If you are drawn to that way of thinking, recall the shallow judgments formed in all ages upon the changes that have most profoundly affected the destiny of mankind. "There are no pages in history more instructive and few which are more humiliating and depressing" than those which record these judgments.

The triumph of Christianity in the Roman world, the force of the Reformation in Europe, the French Revolution, the Prussian snatch at world-ascendancy—all fell as surprises upon the governing classes everywhere.

Have the latest signs of changing faith and sentiment made themselves felt yet? Not among those who frame their plans as if the world after the war were to be no different from that far off world which existed before it. "Nor would *they* believe though one rose from the dead."

Deaf they are to the stirrings of the new spirit. Blind to the evidences on every hand

of the leaven already working, to the writing on the wall which tells those who have failed to guide and protect the People: "Ye are weighed in the balance; ye are found wanting. Your reign is o'er."

Yet even to these the new spirit will show mercy. Many of them strove, according to their lights, to govern well. Some of them gave proof of a nobility of nature which redeemed many faults. They were victims of the old spirit, the bad spirit of competition for superfluities, of letting every man alone to struggle for himself, to crush or to be crushed; the bad old spirit which taught, as Clough's biting lines reveal its teachings, that—

"Thou shalt have one god only: who
Would be at the expense of two?

No graven images may be
Worshipped, except the currency.

Swear not at all; for, for thy curse
Thine enemy is none the worse.

At church on Sunday to attend
Will serve to keep the world thy friend.

Honour thy parents : that is, all
From whom advancement may befall.

Thou shalt not kill : but need'st not strive
Officiously to keep alive.

Do not adultery commit,
Advantage rarely comes of it.

Thou shalt not steal : an empty feat
When it's so lucrative to cheat.

Bear not false witness : let the lie
Have time on its own wings to fly.

Thou shalt not covet : but tradition
Approves all forms of competition."

* * * *

In spite of their training in an evil school, there were many, I repeat, either belonging or akin to the Governing Class, who tried to turn towards what seemed to them, in the dim betraying light which reached their blinkered eyes, to be the right way. Many have now torn their blinkers off, and are ready to take their places in whatever fresh social system may succeed that which is passing away.

This is the most inspiring and encouraging aspect of the Coming Revolution.

I do not speak now of the "conversion" of politicians, of such announcements as—

> "The world will go forward in the full radiance of the perfect day."—*Mr. Lloyd George.*

or

> "The workers must have a more free, more self-developed and humaner life."—*Mr. Asquith.*

These may mean something or nothing: more probably nothing.

I set much more store by such a speech as that of Mr. W. L. Hichens, brother of the novelist and Chairman of Cammell, Laird and Company, a famous armament and shipbuilding firm, made at Greenock in January, 1918.

Mr. Hichens said that since the outbreak of the war State control of industry had advanced by leaps and bounds, and now after many years we were back at the State regulation policy of the Elizabethan era.

"For the past 400 years we had tried one expedient after another—State control of wages and prices, co-operative guilds, the home industries system, the big factory system, economic industrialism—only to end where we began.

"But the fact that these experiments failed in the past was no evidence that they would not succeed to-day. Might it not be that the solution of the industrial problem lay beyond mere intellectual and legal formulæ, beyond all economic laws and doctrines, and depended on our attitude towards social existence—in plain terms, our moral code?

"The god of industry, according to the political economists of the early nineteenth century, was the golden calf, and an unrestricted scramble for the good things of this world was what they set before each individual as the law of life. Such a doctrine strikes at the root of the social organism.

"*No man can serve two masters. He cannot serve himself and the community.*

He can only serve himself by serving the community, and this is surely the only sound foundation on which industry can rest."

* * * *

Here are some of Mr. Hichens's suggestions for laying this foundation :—

"No business is entitled to make unlimited profits. No one class is entitled to benefit unduly at the expense of another. The principle of the Excess Profits Tax should therefore be retained.

"It follows that the reward of Labour must also be determined by the State as representing the community.

"The workers are clearly entitled to have an effective voice in regard to the general conditions under which their work is carried on.

"Establishment of an eight hours' day as a first instalment towards still further reductions. Each worker who has been with a firm one year and kept good time, to be given a holiday on full pay."

This would not long ago have been denounced as "fantastic idealism," as "crude socialist theorising." Now Mr. Hichens' ideas are commonplaces among the most energetic and intelligent of our business men.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE RE-BIRTH OF RELIGION.

> Teach a child what is wise, that is morality.
> Teach him what is wise and beaut ful, that is religion.
> —*T. H. Huxley.*

> When I love God, I love a kind of light and melody and fragrance.—*Saint Augustine.*

That ideas of this order have become commonplaces is due in large part to the stirrings of that re-birth of religion in which the World Revolution has already found vigorous support.

By religion I do not mean wearing better clothes on Sundays than on weekdays, and going to church, and subscribing to missions for the conversion of the heathen a long way off, and pretending that the whole of ancient Jewish literature, together with the varying accounts

of Christ's life and the polemical contributions of Saint Paul and others to early Christian controversy, were the direct work of the Almighty.

Religion is nothing unless it is a living, compelling force, a bond uniting all who are influenced by the sense of brotherhood, all who know that it makes for their own greater happiness, as well as for the greater happiness of others, to be helpful, generous, open-hearted, instead of regarding mankind either with suspicion and grudging justice or as sheep to be fleeced.

Religion in this significance has been in many minds awakened and in many others strengthened by the war. From nothing written about the war have I dissented more utterly, even violently, than from the phrase of John Galsworthy that one result of the madness of Europe will be "the death of mystic Christianity."

What is mystic Christianity?

To my mind it is the Christianity which is independent of creeds and churches, of pres-

byter and priest. It has no need of official, hierarchical interpretations and ceremonies. It draws its comfort and inspiration from the words and life of Christ.

Mystic Christians may belong to churches and recite creeds. Many do. But their hearts and minds rise high above them. Although in humility they may submit themselves to discipline, they attach no more than a secondary value to external usages. Their religion is a part of themselves. They have standards which neither man nor circumstance can change.

All the beauty which Christianity has brought into the world we owe to mystic Christians. All the harm which has been done in the name of Christ must be laid to the charge of those whom I will call Systematic Christians. Systematic Christianity has always been a compromise between (*a*) the "unworldly" ideal of life which Christ proposed to His humble followers, and (*b*) the keeping up of a rich and powerful and dignified caste of officials, at the head of a vast society, only to be held together by "worldly" inducements and suppressions, and by "practical" means.

Christ was a mystic. He founded no society. He did not, like Mahomet, proclaim authority or promise rewards. He did not, as Moses did, set up the fiction of a chosen race. His teaching was directed to one end only—the happiness of individuals, which each must win for himself, and which must be a state of feeling independent of external aids or hindrances. As soon as "practical" men like Saint Paul took hold of Christianity it began to develop upon different lines. Conversion was no longer a matter of purely individual concern, but involved the joining of a society, submitting to officials, agreeing to perform certain acts of obligation. In short, Christianity was taken out of the realm of mystic idealism and turned into a System.

It is one of the root weaknesses of man's nature that systems always obscure the ideas from which they arose. It is so much more easy to accept a dogma than to follow out a train of thought; to live by custom and precedent, and to attach merit to the performance of duties which authority ordains, than to settle for ourselves what we ought to do and to leave

undone, how best we can square our actions with our ideals. The latter course calls for an effort of mind and will which few are apt to make. There is thus an inborn tendency to take the former.

Which tendency is vigorously enforced by the desire of those in authority to add to their importance, to make their positions unassailable, to increase their gains. We often see these motives powerfully moulding systems into which there enter no elements of superstition or of fear. How much greater does their influence become when it is possible for authority to claim divine sanction, to represent itself as interpreting the secrets and as wielding the judgment of God.

Against the huge engine of Systematic Christianity Mysticism struggled in vain. Many mystics by temperatment were goaded into opposing the Church by the follies and wickedness committed in the name of Christ. They saw His precepts either ignored blandly or with ingenuity explained away by numbers of His servants. They saw all the evils which He rebuked flourishing among those to whom the

System gave power. They saw the rulers of Churches loving the uppermost rooms at feasts, the chief seats, and greetings in the market, and to be called "Rabbi! Rabbi!" "Your Reverence," "Your Lordship," "Your Eminence," "Your Holiness," "Your Grace."

Cup and platter are still made clean upon the outside, while within they are full of extortion and excess. Tithe of mint and anise and cummin is scrupulously exacted, while "they omit the weightier matters of the law: justice, mercy and faith." The struggle for incomes and titles is as fierce inside the churches as without them. Read afresh the "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees," lament. It is of world-wide and age-long application. Wherever religious Systems exist, there exist the hypocrisy, the pettiness, the irreligion, on account of which Christ thundered at the Pharisees and Scribes.

Leagued with the rulers of States, depending for their dignities and wealth upon subservience to monarchs and statesmen, the Churches have sold their mystic Christ for empty honours and

for Judas gold. They have rendered unto Cæsar not only the things which are Cæsar's, but likewise the things which are God's. In all lands the apathy which Systematic Christians showed year in, year out, in face of the threats and armings and boastings which led to war; their silence when Europe stood trembling on the edge of the red, horrible pit; their standing by through centuries while all the doctrines they are paid to teach were trampled under foot, have proved their Systematic Christianity to be lip-service.

You may reply, "What could they do or say to turn aside the war? Men were in no mood for sermons." No, truly. But why? Because the Churches had failed to win their ear, to influence their thought. Because even men who kept up religious observances had come to regard religion mainly as a matter of going to church on Sundays and paying rent for a pew.

This was the penalty which Systematic Christianity had to pay for its success—its material success—as a system. It could not raise its voice for peace because it knew no one would

heed it. Nor could it admit that the teaching of Christ embodied merely an ideal toward which the world has made little progress in two thousand years, since that would have been to admit the failure—the spiritual failure—of its system, spite of all its dignity and wealth.

The mystic Christian, having neither taken pay nor garnished himself with any title for teaching what Christ taught, and being further under no obligation to speak or think according to rule, is free to explain to himself as best he can the discordance between his ideal and the reversion of mankind to senseless barbarism. Mysticism does not attempt to be logical. It deals of necessity with cloudy symbols, not with hard and fast affirmations. Mystic Christianity is not a code, but an atmosphere; not a system, but a frame of mind.

A frame of mind which we cannot now dissociate from any endeavour towards things lovely and of good report, towards a life which aims at simplicity and fair dealing, at kindliness, at service, and at love. Many called agnostics—atheists even—have been mystic Christians following these aims. "Inasmuch

as ye have done it unto the least of these my little ones, ye have done it unto Me."

All whose hearts have thrilled to the nobility of "Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more"; all who have felt the truth and beauty of the Sermon on the Mount; all who have tried, however stumblingly, to forgive unto seventy times seven, to relieve and comfort the poor and helpless, the afflicted or oppressed, and to keep themselves unspotted from the world (which means, I take it, to settle questions of conduct according to a standard different from the world's standard of profit and applause); all whose imaginations have been stirred and sweetened by Christ's life and words —all these have breathed the atmosphere of Mystic Christianity.

To say that this atmosphere, this frame of mind, was dying before the war began, and, when it is over, will be dead, seems so perverse a misreading of the mind of humanity that I believe John Galsworthy's choice of words must have obscured his meaning.

Systematic Christianity has, indeed, been

dying for centuries. The seeds of death were in its proud, presumptuous body from the moment it was born. Thousands of its officials, from simple ministers to Popes, have striven to endue it with the Spirit of Christ, but they have striven in vain. Like all systems, it accounts the spirit less than the letter. Its code, its discipline, its hierarchical pretensions, are more to it than any atmosphere. By its ineffectual struggles to strike a balance between the principles it professes and the practice of the worldlier kind of men, it has sunk more and more deeply into a bog of incongruous ideas.

As a personal faith, not publicly proclaimed, but cherished in the hearts of mystic Christians, Christ's teaching sheds a glow upon the pathways of our puzzling life. To fall short of compliance with that teaching is not to fall into condemnation. No harsh discord sounds between precept and practice. Erect the ideal into a code and base a system upon it, then at once false notes painfully jangle. Claims are set up which cannot be substantiated. Standards are proclaimed impossible to justify.

Judgments are delivered (Galileo, Tolstoi) at which the world is forced to smile.

All systems, soon or late, die from the effects of the same poison. They exalt the importance of the frame above that of the picture. The casket is everything, the jewel is neglected. Use and custom make systems appear to be part of the necessary, settled plan of life, until suddenly they are tested by some momentous choice. Then the wood of the trees which went to build their temples is found to have rotted. The wood crumbles, and the systems cease to be.

Such a choice was offered to Systematic Christianity while the nations drifted into war. Think what might have been the result of a united appeal by all the Churches for sanity! Not a voice lifted! Not a protest uttered! All the officials of all the systems, from those who live in palaces down to humble priests and pastors, were silent at the most terrible turning-point in human history. And so, while they turned their heads away, the hideous, senseless massacre began, each side calling upon its god for succour, just as if the world had slipped

back thirty centuries to the days of the barbarous and disgusting clans whose doings are recorded in the Old Testament.

No system, after such an exposure of its hollowness and timidity, could continue to be as it was before. You may argue that Systematic Christianity has shown precisely the same degree of timidity, and exposed the hollowness of its principles, many times earlier. Yes, but not in so strong a light; not with a world looking on which was so quick to mark inconsistency as the world is to-day. Systems fail many times ere they come to their last and fatal ordeal.

Mystical beliefs are beyond reach of logic or the happenings of the outward universe. None need relinquish faith in God because men are the dupes of ambitious rulers or the victims of incapable statesmen. The knowledge that—

> "We fall to rise,
> Are baffled to fight better,"

is sufficient to sustain the mystic against every shock.

That God's ways are too mysterious for us to explain and classify is the conviction which upholds many hearts amid the welter of our old familiar world. But, in that case, why support a system which pretends to explain them? Why keep up a vast organisation which pushes itself in between God and Man, yet in the hour of burning trial gives God the go-by, and is powerless in the service of mankind?

The world would be the richer for churches within whose walls all could meet and worship, proclaiming the fellowship and mutual goodwill of classes no less than individuals, of nations as well as smaller social groups. A common profession of equality before the Unknown Power, a common stretching out of hands towards the darkness which awaits us all, would go far towards sweetening human relations.

There was value as well as picturesqueness in the coming together of villagers and "the quality" every Sunday in the grey old ivy-covered church, kneeling down and confessing themselves to their Maker, asking for kinder hearts, more thoughtful patience, and perpetual memory of the Golden Rule.

Much of the social unrest, many of the labour troubles which have created bitterness and sown distrust, might have been spared us had there been a bond uniting all classes and bringing them into an environment other than that of conflicting interests. This bond the Churches might have, and, according to their pretensions, ought to have furnished. By attaching themselves to the wealthier and more powerful social elements, they threw their opportunity away.

"God for men, religion for women," says the old Garibaldian in Joseph Conrad's "Nostromo." The Churches have made religion, not a living "bond," which was the original meaning of the word, but a lifeless formality. Women may continue for a time to draw comfort from formalism. Habit and association keep every system an unconscionable time a-dying. Men are by the colour of their minds more mystic, less materially inclined than women. They will more and more, after *il gran rifiuto* by which Systematic Christianity has shamed itself, prefer to put their relations with the Unknown Power upon a personal instead of an official footing. Even those who accept

the Systematic theology will, many of them, decide in future to approach God without professional assistance, to rely upon His loving-kindness rather than upon a mechanical miracle and the stereotyped intercession of priestly lips.

CHAPTER XIV.

SYSTEM THE FOE.

The darksome statesman . . lest his ways
be found,
Worked underground.
Churches and altars fed him; perjuries
Were gnats and flies.
It rained about him blood and tears. . . .
—*Henry Vaughan, The Silurist.*

Thoughts on the decay of Systematic Christianity lead on to speculation in a wider field. Authority, establishing itself by means of system, was the poison which turned the desire of the Churches away from mystic to material aims. But authority is far more guilty than that. To its perversion of the meaning and the ends of life, to its monstrous claims and ambitions, to the systems it erected for its maintenance and increase, were wholly due the letting loose of devastation upon Europe, the

cutting short by mechanical, hateful means of tens of thousands of lives, all the pain and loss and misery caused by this most barbarous of wars.

* * * *

The more religion is systematised, the further we have seen it depart from its original inspiration.

The more justice is systematised, the less can it be counted upon to hold the scales even. An Eastern Cadi under a palm-tree, or the chieftain of a clan settling disputes by his turf fireside, were more likely to give sound decisions than judges whose minds are generally marrowless, or juries whom adroit, unscrupulous advocates have done their best to befog. The machinery of law courts gives an unfair advantage to the rich suitor. Technical subtleties often outweigh the claims of equity and common sense.

The more government is systematized and the number of officials increased, and their sense of importance allowed to swell, the more cumbrous are the obstacles to getting public business swiftly and sensibly done. Red tape, having been brought in for the humble purpose

of "tidying up" papers, is eventually worshipped and used to strangle any attempt at rapid despatch or a vigorous, untrammelled handling of affairs. System ceases to be an aid to activity. It becomes an end in itself. More importance is attached to respect for the methods and traditions of the System than to the work which the System was established to do.

Every institution of man suffers earlier or later from this hardening of the arteries. Every institution dies from it. We can see it destroying schools and societies no less surely than it destroys Churches and Governments. We can see the artificial swallowing up the real. Ceremonies increase while their meaning shrinks. Style outweighs matter. So huge a pile of unessentials, decorative or merely formular, is erected that in time the whole edifice is bound to topple over and come crashing to the ground, unless, atrophied by a slow process of decay, it dies unobserved long after it has faded out of mind.

Sentiments as well as institutions become twisted by this disease. Systematize the senti-

ment of pity and you get a Charity Organisation Society. The more the sentiment of Patriotism is systematized, the more false and blind a power for evil does it become. Love of country is an emotion very meet and right to be cherished. In most of us it is compounded of—

(I) Habit.

(II) The influence of early memories and associations.

(III) The liking for the companionship of people whose language we speak and to whose ways we are accustomed.

(IV) The presence of those whom we love and delight to be with.

An emotion so compounded is admirable and worthy of all encouragement. But when love of country is made, as it has been in Germany, to serve the greed or ambition of rulers and classes, when it becomes harsh, vain-glorious, intolerant, then *corruptio optimi pessima*. Disease turns the fair flower into an abomination, harmful and offensive to the health and nostrils of mankind.

I love England because when I say "Eng-

land," there comes into my mind the picture of a meadow, with hedges round it, where cows stand knee-deep in flowers and grasses, and near by a cool old house, yellow-washed, with diamond-paned casements, dreaming among gardens rich in scent and colour, rich in spring blossoms of cherry, apple and pear, rich in autumn fruits and in vegetables of a succulence that no town dweller can even fancy. Beyond the garden are crofts and cornfields through which a path meanders to a grey, old ivy-covered church in its quiet green God's Acre, with thatched or stone-roofed farms and cottages about it. I love England because my blood sings to the music and the vigour of English speech; because there I meet more friends than I meet elsewhere; because I am accustomed to the English mode of life and the English character; because in England I am "at Home."

I do not love England for the size of her possessions, though it gives me a pleasing thrill to see the Union Jack float in far-off corners of the world. I do not love her for her vast trading interests. I am proud to belong to a

nation which has given birth to other nations, and which has never been afraid to stand up for liberty, its own and that of others, and which has led the way towards many changes of value to mankind. But neither in the past nor in this our own time do I think she can be called faultless. I certainly do not share the belief expressed by Cecil Rhodes in a will which he made while he was still a young man, that "the British race is the finest which history has yet produced."

Nor do I agree with the late Lord Grey, who wrote in his "Memoir of Hubert Hervey":—

> "In so far as an Englishman differs in essentials" from men of other nationalities, "he believes that he represents a more perfectly developed standard of general excellence," regarding them as being "on the whole not so excellent as himself."

That I call a Prussian attitude, an attitude of intolerable, priggish conceit.

Lord Grey added that if this were not so, the energies of Englishmen would be directed

to making themselves resemble men of other nationalities. There is a want of logic here. Almost everyone of us would rather be himself or herself than anybody else. This does not imply, however, that we think ourselves superior to everybody else. Almost certainly we shall admit that others are more excellent than we are. Yet we do not direct our energies to copying them. We prefer to be ourselves, even though we may not "represent so perfectly developed a standard" as others do.

An individual who claims to be above his fellows is rightly laughed at. A family which should pride itself upon its superiortiy to all other families would be a fit subject for satire. To me it seems equally fatuous that a nation should exalt itself, saying, "We are the finest race on earth." Since I am an Englishman, I would rather be English than anything else. But to give myself airs about it, and to strut around declaring the English race superior to other races, would be a symptom, I consider, of a mild form of insanity.

The line of thought followed by Cecil Rhodes

in his youth, and by Lord Grey when he had not the same excuse, illustrates one of the evil aspects of systematized, and therefore mechanical, patriotism. To contrast ourselves with others and to plume ourselves upon our supposed advantages is among individuals, and among groups of individuals, either eccentricity or the extreme of bad manners. If the members of a club were to claim that their club "represented a more perfectly developed standard of excellence" than other clubs, we should say they were either crazy or ill-bred. Yet Lord Grey contends that "independent nations" ought to feel thus, and ought to put forth their whole energy to prove it. This, he claims, is "the moral justification for international strife and for war."

According to Lord Grey's argument, Germany was justified in making war in order to "stamp a great part of humanity with the impress of the German spirit," as General von Bernhardi phrased it.

The plea that Germany had war forced upon her was, of course, only put forward for the

quieting of the popular mind. It was not defended by the leaders of German thought. Herr Walther Rathenau, a prominent captain of industry, expressed the view of the more intellectual German patriots when he said :—

> "The basis of the conflict is a difference in fundamental ideals of life and duty. That is the deep reason why war must go on until it is proved which of these ideals is the true one, and that is why Germans are willing to die, and suffer worse than death, in order to win."

Here we have love of country turned into something altogether different from the sentiment which we analysed above. It has lost its genial personal flavour. It is no longer an individual sentiment. It has become a war-cry. How has this occurred?

It has occurred, I think, in this way. Nations have been taught by their Ruling Classes that it is the duty of a "patriot" to fight for his country. The mass of people accepted that teaching without further ado. They did not stop to think about it. It is true that the Ruling

Classes have given up saying, as they once said, "It is your duty to fight for us." They now say, "It is your duty to fight for the State," and invariably they endeavour to persuade each fighting nation that it is the victim of unprovoked attack. Which shows us the Ruling Class mightily afraid that their teaching may meet with indifference or opposition! But it has only of late begun to be effectively questioned. The mass of people have until recently believed that it is the duty of "patriots" to fight for their country whenever the Ruling Class tell them it is necessary to do so.

But here and there, outside the mass of people, are men who feel the need of intellectual conviction. In order to satisfy and entrap them, a solemn theory and explanation of this "duty" have been invented. Some of the inventors are deliberate tricksters. Some propound their theories as much for their own satisfaction as for that of others. I have no doubt Lord Grey and Herr Walther Rathenau belong to the second category. War seems to them, as it seems to everyone who thinks about it, tragically foolish. They are forced to try

and find some reason for continuing war. This reason they and many others place in "the need for struggle among nations as a means of testing standards and ideals," and in the securing of progress by the aid of those which are proved to be the more worthy of acceptance.

This theory and explanation are not, I repeat, produced for the mass of people. The mass of people would be bewildered by talk of conflicting ideals, and they would laugh at the suggestion that they were upholding their "standard of general excellence" as superior to all other standards.

The mass of people believe that war is unavoidable because they have been told so. They will as readily believe, when they are told that it is foolish and unnecessary. The many always take their beliefs from a few. In order that changes may be made in human affairs, it is only needful to persuade a few that they are desirable. To prevent these few from being persuaded of the folly and needlessness of war, and thereafter from causing war to cease among

civilised peoples, this notion of conflicting ideals has been conceived and is gravely argued.

The necessity for such argument shows how hardly pressed for ammunition are the defenders of war. Successively they have had to abandon the duty of fighting for God, the duty of fighting for divinely appointed kings, the advantage of fighting for territory, the advantage of fighting for trade. Each of these defences has been in turn thrown down. Now they endeavour to screen themselves behind this flimsy pretence of warring standards and divergent national ideals.

It is so nonsensical that I feel almost ashamed to argue such a theme. By the tribunal of history it must be speedily dismissed. We were taught, when we read the Bible in our childhood, that the Israelites had higher ideals than the nations whom they conquered. If that be true, then conquest was bad for those ideals; they did not distinguish the Israelites when they emerged from the wilderness.

It is to this early teaching that we owe the misapprehension as to wars being undertaken

at the bidding of the Almighty, for the raising of standards moral and religious. It gains no support from a study of wars in general. If there was any conflict of ideals between the Athenians and the Lacedæmonians who destroyed them with the help of a tag, rag and bobtail of Peloponnesian allies, those of the Athenians were the finer. If the tribes which overthrew the Roman Empire were setting up any standard of civilised life, it was inferior to that of Rome, even in her decay.

What were the fundamental ideals fought for by France and England all through their long series of wars? Neither France nor England had her standard of general excellence superseded. Each kept her national idiosyncrasies. And now they fight side by side! Only fifty years back Prussia and Austria fought. Whose ideal triumphed then? Or are their ideals still distinct, and will they be obliged some day to make war upon one another again?

This theory of war inevitable, war necessary for the evolution and improvement of mankind, is seen to be baseless as soon as we examine it.

In nine cases out of every ten wars are not made by nations at all, but by rulers.

Peoples have fought, and fought rightly, for freedom to live or worship or be governed as they chose. Sometimes they have fought in vain, as did the peoples of Melos against Athens, and the Albigenses against the Inquisition. But their sacrifices have not been vain. Liberty is worth fighting for, worth dying for, when the lack of it is felt as a personal indignity. Every war for Liberty strikes a fetter off Liberty's limbs.

Man has freed himself from many tyrannies and superstitions. He asserts to-day more boldly than ever before in his recorded history the right of individual judgment. He repels the claim of any official to stand between him and the Divine Spirit. He derides the pretence of rulers that they are appointed to rule by God. We are beating down at length the priestly doctrine that our life in this world is unimportant, and that all our activities should be regulated by the anticipation of a future existence. Whether there be a future life or no, we cannot tell. In either event it should

clearly be our endeavour to live happily and usefully and kindly here and now.

But in place of the delusion that man should sacrifice himself for a place in Heaven, there has grown up in these times a delusion equally damnable—that individual men should sacrifice themselves for the State. As much rubbish is talked about Fatherland and Patriotism as was ever talked about Predestination and Grace.

It seems there is always some greed of authority, some ambition towards power at work, persuading man that the future matters more to him than the present. We have still to proclaim aloud that we hold the present to be of more interest than any future; that the freedom and happiness of the individual are of greater value than any dream of gain to rulers, any increase of domination, any delusive shadow of advantage in years to come.

Those who fight for freedom fight for substantial profit, both to themselves and to those who come after. Most wars, however, are the outcome, not of revolt against oppression, but of folly or incompetence or greed. Into most

wars Peoples are pushed without knowing what the quarrel is about. It is only after war has begun that they begin to hear the phrase repeated parrot-like, "We are fighting for national ideals." It conveys almost nothing to their minds. They leave such abstractions to be played with or turned to profit by professors and writers of books. They have a shrewd common sense which tells them that the phrase is a phrase and no more.

Mill trounced in his "Political Economy" the vulgarity of mind which supposes "inherent natural differences" to exist between races and nations. All Peoples who live under conditions which are in the main the same (conditions of climate and scenery, of food and soil) have in the main the same standards and ideals. These are simple enough. To get through life without more than a fair average of trouble, without losing caste or forfeiting respect. To keep on God's side so long as this does not involve any painful sacrifice of worldly advantage. To deal honestly and helpfully with friends and acquaintances, and not too hardly with persons outside that ring. To leave one's family with

some provision, even though it should only be enough "club money" to pay for a decent funeral.

These are the usual springs of conduct, I take it, among all Peoples. Only under the intoxicating influence of words presenting unfamiliar ideas in attractive guise do they even think of standards and ideals. They are not at ease with the thought. It is too misty to be grasped. When war is over, the Peoples pick up again the threads of daily life. Ideals and standards remain on each side what they were before.

The theory that wars are caused by the stubborn adherence of Peoples to conflicting aims and principles breaks down, therefore, for lack of proof. But even if there were in truth this conflict, it would not justify slaughter and maiming and all the hateful accompaniments of war. The hollowness of the plea is at once revealed by the limiting of it to nations. If it be a duty to fight in order to force a certain view of life upon those who are unwilling to take it, why should such fighting not be done by smaller groups, by individuals even?

There is more divergence of ideal between the inhabitants of manufacturing towns and those who dwell in villages than there is between the Peoples of any two countries. In the towns unpleasant, monotonous, mechanical toil is willingly performed in order that the diversions of crowded streets may be enjoyed, bright lights; varied, palate-stimulating foods; spectacles of all kinds. The country-folk for their part prefer simpler joys, plainer food eaten with appetite, early to bed and early to rise, labour that changes with the seasons, brings healthy fatigue, and can itself give more pleasure, with a sense of completer living, more charged with meaning, than a factory task.

Yet no one dreams of urging on the factory workers to do battle with the tillers of the soil, while if individuals whose "ideals of life and duty" differ were to shoot each other down, or to throw bombs into one another's houses, they would be sent to the gallows or shut up in lunatic asylums.

Such battles as these did occur in earlier stages of man's development. Now we speak

of those who fought them as "savages." First these savages were constrained to live at peace because their combats were inconvenient to their neighbours. Then the combative spirit died away. Men grouped themselves for the purpose of mutual protection in larger communities. The family gave place to the tribe, the tribe to the city state, the city state to the nation. Within national limits fighting was forbidden and severely punished. The only war which anyone can be found to defend to-day is war between nations; and then only by arguments rooted in ignorance of man's nature and born of a desire to plead some excuse for action which proclaims itself both senseless and in human.

For there is no more reason why nations should fight than that families and tribes should carry on blood feuds, or cities struggle to crush one another out. War among nations is not "inevitable" any more than fighting between smaller groups was inevitable. As soon as this fighting between smaller groups became a nuisance, it was sternly ended. Families stopped individuals from fighting. Tribes

stopped families from fighting. Nations forbade tribes and districts to fight. Now the time has come for a still wider grouping of mankind. Nations must found a community, and this community must stop fighting among nations—by force, if force be required.

"But," you may object, "surely this will mean setting up a more complicated system, and investing officials with more authority than the world has ever known before."

Surely not.

In no two countries is there a more healthy dislike of authority, a more stubborn resolve not to submit to the tyranny of System, than in the British Empire and the United States. Yet it is these two countries which took the first active and definite step towards a community of nations. By their Treaty of 1914 they agreed upon a procedure which made war between them impossible. They agreed to submit all disputes between them to an International Court which can take twelve months to consider its award. Only give nations time to think calmly over their quarrels, and they

will never make war. They never gain anything by it. They only suffer, and pay the bill.

Ever since government was systematized and authority puffed up to exalt itself, those who profit by war have been allowed to push nations into it. Thus the chief object of government has been betrayed.

Men banded themselves together, first into families, then into tribes, then into nations, so that as individuals they might be better protected in the enjoyment of their property, in their freedom of movement, in their liberty to live unmolested and at ease. In order to this protection there came into being "the State." At once the process of systematizing began. Authority seized every occasion to raise itself above those who had set it in office. At last, in our days, the State has forgotten the object for which it was created. The monster lords it over those who brought it into being. The monstrous claim is advanced that the State was not made by and for Man, but Man for the State, and that he owes to it all his best energy, all his devotion, even his life.

According to Treitschke, the State is entitled to claim all the powers of the individual for itself. Fichte, another German supporter of madhouse delusions wrongly called philosophy, declared that Virtue meant "the surrender of personality" to the State, and Vice "to think of self." These absurdities remind me of what Professor William James said about professors in Germany:—

> "They think and write from each other and for each other and at each other exclusively. With this exclusion of the open air, all true perspective gets lost. Extremes and oddities count as much as sanities, and command the same attention."

It is an "extreme" to speak of the State as if it had a separate existence apart from that of the People, who are the State. It is an "oddity" to suggest that a People should undertake as a duty the forcing of their rule or their culture upon other Peoples. Such action cannot possibly benefit them, though it may advantage "the State," which means the men in authority who for the moment control the Government machine.

Must I, because these men choose to embroil themselves, or because they drift into war, must I blindly support them? Yes, I am told, because this is "patriotic."

Well, it was "patriotic" for Englishmen to die in the snows of the Crimea, and for Russians to leave their bones in Manchuria. Yet now we know the Crimean War was a stupid blunder, and the ill-managed war of Russia against Japan both a folly and a crime. We respect the patriots no less, but we say their patriotism was abused. How can we know, if we accept fighting for the State as a duty to be blindly followed, that our patriotism will not be abused also? What Germany of late called patriotism is to-day ridiculed as ambition run mad. And what is "the State" in this sense but the voice of a monarch, the policy of a minister, the tradition of a System?

Until we recapture the frame of mind which regards Systems, whether religious or political, with suspicion, and which jealously limits the power of authority to stifle individual judgment or reduce personal liberty, we shall suffer as we are suffering to-day. If ever a State or a

Church had proved itself so valuable to Mankind as to deserve self-effacing obedience, some argument in favour of subordinating Individuality to System might be advanced. But that has never happened. "There is no instance on record," wrote Buckle in his heroic fragment of a History of Civilisation, "of any class possessing power without abusing it." These words should be constantly in our minds. They should be written up in every Palace, in every Parliament, in every public building.

Churches have clung to wealth and worldly rank whenever they have been able to secure them. The more powerful their organisation, the less their power for good. While the Catholic Church dictated to monarchs, it countenanced all vices. The Russian Church possessed the most elaborate fabric ever created by an ecclesiastical hierarchy, yet the moral atmosphere of Russia was malarial.

While Mystical religion brings men face to face with God, teaching that those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth, Systematized religion persuades them that they

can escape the consequences of their evil deeds by confessing to priests, by burning candles, by crossing themselves whenever they pass a church or a holy picture, and by other mechanical observances. Of necessity evil deeds increase.

As for political systems, they merely commit the crimes and blunders of individuals upon a magnified scale. To attach more importance to the continuance of a polity than to the happiness of individual men and women is inhuman as well as absurd. To speak of Peoples as Mommsen spoke of the Celts on the Continent of Europe in Cæsar's time, and of the Irish to-day, as "thoroughly useless in a political point of view," is only possible to those who mistake the meaning and significance of the life of man.

We are here in the world for a short space of time, to draw what content we may from it. The longest life is but a flash, when we think of the countless millions who have lived through countless ages before us. Authority the most absolute looks like the strutting of a

peacock, when we remind ourselves that in a few years those who exert it will have been forgotten. The best that any of us can hope for is to enjoy health and love and labour; to do and to receive kindness; and, when we lie a-dying, to be able to look back and say: "'Tis a good world. We are glad to have lived in it."

Why, then, considering our infinite unimportance, should any among us seek by system and authority to create fears and bondage? Why strive to enforce any belief or any allegiance, remembering that of us and all our nostrums every trace will speedily be wiped out? Why blow each other to pieces over a fantastic misunderstanding, in order to bolster up some crazed ambition or some futile claim?

Against the freedom and happiness of individuals no Church, no State, neither dogma nor system, should be allowed to prevail. Let us clearly understand, and pass the knowledge on to those who follow us, that all these organisms are parasites upon Humanity, seeking their own nourishment and increase, persuading man to forsake his true interests in order to

support them, making the world hideous and us fools of Nature, causing the nations to sweat and slay and struggle for objects which in the scale of Reality shift the balance not at all.

These sinister powers the Revolution must prune, root and branch together. Not until they are kept in subjection, made servants instead of masters, will Man breathe free.

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